DECEMBER, 1925 VOLUME LXII, NO. 4

# THE BOOKMAN

JOHN FARRAR, *Editor*

## THE POINT OF VIEW

### GIVING OR RECEIVING

FEW of life's minor joys (whatever cynics may say) can match, either for the pure pleasure of the sentiments involved or for their admirable relations with the conscience, those having to do with the custom of Christmas giving. So well attested are the felicities of philanthropy, so called, even upon thus small a scale, that it came almost as a shock the other day when A. ventured to call in question some of the accepted thinking on this point — ventured, indeed, to assert in so many words that it is much better to receive than to give.

"It is nice to make presents", admitted A., who can always be counted upon for the minority report. "But", he continued, "it is fully as nice to get them. I derive considerable satisfaction, by and large, from distributing more or less costly objects of all sorts not only at Christmas but whenever the whim or the necessity seizes me. I must confess, however, that I never feel so worthy, so entirely at peace with myself and others, so noble, if I may say so, as when somebody gives me something."

Now A., as one of us immediately informed him, would fare better in this world if he did not speak his mind so freely. He might even get more Christmas presents. No one wants to send presents to a person who goes about hinting so abjectly, nay, demanding them under the thin pretext of psychological discussion. When we had told him this and had made clear our rather poor opinion of his Christmas spirit, he undertook to defend himself as follows:

"The uplifting thrill you fellows get in giving things away is not so unmixed with dubious motives as you seem to imagine. Of course you want to make others happy, but at the same time you want them to realize how kind, generous, thoughtful, and really wonderful you are, now don't you? I am not so naive as to insist that you are activated by self interest, for I have long known the futility of that age-old quibble. But I still maintain that you are after the good opinion of these people.



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"It strikes me that receiving a gift evokes far finer feelings. We feel instantly that we are loved, and the sight of the gift itself is sufficient to quell any doubts that may struggle to arise to consciousness. At once we feel worthy of all this attention, we feel righteous, and, in accordance with a simple natural phenomenon, we are quite likely to begin to behave righteously and worthily. That's how it is with me. I only wish that I could get the same uplifted and uplifting sensation by giving things away, as you do."

We thought it useless to point out the logical holes in his remarks, the specious nature of his effort to combine a broadly social point of view with his appalling concentration upon the problem of what he would get for Christmas. The worst of it is that we are now in duty bound, by our principle of trying to make others happy, to send poor A. something gorgeous. And unless we are to give up our side of the argument, we must get a great deal of pleasure out of it. A., on the other hand, is under no obligation to send us anything whatever. All he need do is open his packages and feel uplifted. Our only comfort is the well known fact that it is better to give than to receive.

## THESE WILD YOUNG WOMEN

"THE NEW GIRL", "The Modern Woman", and a score of similar terms have assaulted ear and eye for many years. Perhaps from Eve's own very newness. In fiction heroines have battered their heads against walls, or have triumphed according to the will of the author who created them. F. Scott Fitzgerald, Alice Duer Miller, Arthur Train, Gertrude Atherton, have created flapper types over which fond mammas um and oh. Floyd Dell provided several spectacles of moral revolt in feminine ranks. This season, though, the modern young woman has come into her own waving father complexes as vociferously as ever the mother complex was flapped in our faces in that long string of autobiographical novels from youths a year or so out of college. Wilbur Daniel Steele approaches a daring situation in "Taboo", and he succeeds in writing a memorable novel, but his young lady has not any very definite modernity. Amber Shenstone in Floyd Dell's rollicking novel, "Runaway", is modern enough for most tastes, but her actions are in the main approved by the Blue Laws; therefore she, perhaps, cannot be classed as truly modern. Along comes H. G. Wells with Christina Alberta and, with his usual clarity and power to portray the thing of the moment, explains this difficult creature of the bobbed hair and tailored clothes as no one else has quite done. Now, whether or not we like this British flapper of Mr. Wells's, with her determination not to produce children and her unwillingness to marry, we cannot but understand the processes of her mind and the corners of her heart. So appealingly does the historian of the world tell the history of one small girl that we almost envy the unfortunate Bobby, condemned to be lover rather than husband, desiring more than anything else in the world that prosaic thing — a child of his own. What will the American public think of this Christina Alberta? Will she shock us as much as Ann Veronica did years past, or are we so accustomed to the Janet Marches of the world that the self determined Chrissy will pass as a fascinating character rather than a subject for

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

club and dinner table discussions?

Let it not be thought that Mr. Wells takes sides in this matter. He usually does, but in this truly magnificent book of his, "Christina Alberta's Father" (Macmillan), he shows the new and the old, the fumbling and the precise, the trembling and the courageous, with a sensitiveness to new thoughts and a regard for old traditions, yet with an impartiality cloaked in humor and pathos. It is the young men who should read this book and wonder and worry. If Christina Alberta has her way, and science aids, mayhap the young men will soon be the bearers of children; unless, to be sure, the Christina Albertas of the world decide that there shall be no children at all at all.

## THE CONSTITUTION

ONE of the most significant of present day manifestations is the increasing interest in the careful study of the Constitution of the United States — that great document which has so successfully stood the test of time and has become, and is more and more becoming, a model for newborn republics. That it represents to the world the immutability of authority in this country — vested by other countries in kings, emperors and czars — is an accepted fact. That it has not been so universally accepted in those terms by our own people is equally true.

The World War shook nations to their very foundations — methods and schemes of democratic government have been under the most careful scrutiny. The acid test is being applied to both theory and practice. The people of the United States, of their own volition and under sane and farsighted leadership, have been induced more carefully to study the fundamentals of their own governmental institutions. In thirty six states laws have been passed making compulsory the study of the Constitution in public schools — constantly more states are falling into line, and it is a reasonable expectation that within a very short time all pupils in the public schools will be obliged to study the Constitution as a part of the regular curriculum. Chief among recent books elucidating the history, purposes, and results of the operation of the Constitution is "The Constitution of the United States" by the Honorable James M. Beck, late Solicitor General of the United States. A translation into French has achieved a remarkable sale; very shortly there is to appear a German translation. It is significant to note that these two countries, under a republican form of government, have displayed a keener interest in our great Magna Charta than those countries in which a constitutional monarchy is still in vogue. But who shall say that our invisible monarch may not speedily become the standard of government which shall be worldwide? It is plainly up to the American people and American statesmen to demonstrate that this mandate of government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall be so observed and administered that the whole world may be persuaded to adopt this, the most benignant and most stable form of government yet evolved.

## VIEWING WITH ALARM

THIS is frankly a tirade, based upon those two antithetical phrases: "to point with pride", and "to view with

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

alarm". Or rather our failure to do either. For if we point with pride we are called jingoistic, and if we view with alarm there are a thousand voices to shout, "Wolf! wolf!" It is now the fashion to affect a knowing smile for all matters — and keep silent.

If someone speaks with a hint of uneasiness about our flask-carrying younger generation, weekend petting parties, chain smokers (whether false or true), he is diagnosed by the Freudians as a man with too many inhibitions; if someone grows indignant at the kind of meretricious books which have been published in recent years he is hailed as licentious and a Puritan; if someone speaks out angrily against political crookedness and scarecrow national figures he is either called a Bolshevist or else he is looked upon with assumed tolerance and asked if he is stupid enough to expect anything else of this country in the year 1925; if someone writes of the decreasing birth rate in three-generation and four-generation American families he is howled down as a Nordic nuisance — howled down by people who have developed nothing more substantial than an attitude!

We as a people have allowed ourselves the privilege of becoming too easily bored. Mr. Mencken, fully realizing this, provides entertaining sham battles in which he acts the parts of besieger and besieged. The newspapers, knowing this, corral the funny men by the hundreds and print eight pages of comic strips, fillers of jokes and pictures of three legged calves, and bid against one another for the syndicated work of Ring Lardner, Walt Mason, H. C. Witwer, Octavus Roy Cohen, Sam Hellman, and Stephen Leacock. And readers and reviewers of current books state uncompromisingly that a book is criminal only if it is a bore.

This boredom is no doubt unfeigned, but it is nevertheless a refuge from the effort of thinking. We read compends, never sources, and make best sellers out of books which offer us the wisdom and knowledge of the world in tablet form; we listen to smart young men who solemnly tell us that the movies, jazz music, the circus, are "lively" arts; we pay to have the writings of philosophers popularized for us —

And that is perhaps why we no longer point with pride or view with alarm, because it would require a definite stand on our parts, a stand based on convictions, on a model of conduct, the mere thought of which causes us these days to be bored. We have not the spirit to call our souls our own; no, nor even to entertain the belief that we have souls.

## THE EVIL HABIT OF CLASSIFICATION

EVERYONE is guilty now and then of classifying. It is a minor vice but not without its dangers, particularly in literature. A young lady recently asked her English instructor, "Will you please give me a short list of good books on 'What Makes Literature'?" Nor was her instructor able to explain to her the unreasonableness of her request. "There must be some way", she argued, "to tell what *is* literature and what *isn't*. Can't you give me a list of different kinds of writers, like stylists . . ." "Such as non-stylists", her instructor put in. For convenience in studying we must, it is apparent, have general headings under which to catalogue books. Yet the terms "realism", "romance", "naturalism", etc., are vague and disquieting, so much so that one of America's

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

foremost women novelists wrote us recently a letter which is a remarkably clear statement of artistic creed:

"Since you have already discovered the dreadful truth, words, not realistic details, are my literary preoccupation. I have the miser's passion for words; the passion some painters have for colors and some lapidaries for precious stones.

"For the rest, I dislike labels as heartily as I dislike threadbare phrases. If realism means simply plain sewing, without embroidery, then I am no more a realist than I am a symbolist or an ironist — or, for the matter of that, a victim of any other one among the casual cults which afflict our babbling democracy. All I have ever tried to do is to write the truth about life, as I have known it, in living and beautiful words; and, as we learn sooner or later, life defies categories.

"The only theory I hold firmly regarding the writing of fiction is that the substance we call reality must filter through the imagination and dissolve before it can be transformed or transfused into art. The characters and the scene of my latest novel lived in my mind ten years; yet I am assigned with more alacrity than discernment to some particular school which appears to 'excel in the use of photographic detail' — a thing I never used in my life. Strange, isn't it, the way we get classified?"

## EAST IS EAST

THERE are dangers connected with everything, not excepting appreciation of natural landscape. The middle westerner who comes to Vermont or New Hampshire is almost bound to speak out his delight in the green, castellated hills, the surf-like movement of a field of red-top hay, the brooks with their beds of stone and waterfalls, the mauve and amber shadows in the valleys, the gashes of brilliant maple leaves against the green of the pines.

But let the middle westerner beware. Let him withhold his childlike wonder, at least his expression of it, until such time as there are only the trees to hear and whisper back their proud answer. For the human inhabitants of New England have an arrogant regard for their local scenery. They have seen the northern spruces in winter when the boughs made of each tree a cone of glistening white, when the snow lay deep and unstained on the mountains, and sleighbells tinkled on the roads which lead through the valleys, under the covered bridges trimmed with ermine. New Englanders can be told nothing about their immediate country that they do not know; and well may they have for it an arrogant regard. For their fondness comes near to being a passion. For instance, there is one infallible way of telling a loyal Vermonter. It is this: take him into a strange house; then blindfold him; then twist him rapidly around and around until he is so dizzy he can barely stand; then suddenly remove the blindfold from his eyes and ask quickly: "Where's Ascutney?" If, without hesitation, he points his finger in the right direction, you will know he is a loyal Vermonter. If he doesn't, you will know his parents or grandparents came from New York or down from Maine.

Well may the middle westerner have admiration for the landscape of New England, but let him be wary of expressing it. For the New Englander is certain to say in scornfully twisted words, "You don't have anything like this out west, do you; it is all flat and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

uninteresting, isn't it?" Of course there is little chance of convincing the New Englander that the middle west is not all flat and uninteresting, for he has been as far west as Philadelphia and knows what he knows. Nor is there any reason in trying to convince him. The danger lies in the middle westerner's impressionability. He is likely to forget the Rocky River gorge at Cleveland, the oak and maple covered hills along the Ohio, the autumn loveliness of Cincinnati, the mysterious sand dunes of Indiana, the dalles of Wisconsin, the changing shore line and changing shades of the great lakes, the wheat fields of Iowa and Kansas in summer, the grandeur of Minnesota's forests in winter — When the New Englander grows overweening the middle westerner, in self defense, should point to the Connecticut River and, in that ridiculous speech for which he is famous, should say, "There's a little creek that runs through the northwest corner of our farm: it's just like that."

## SMOKE

By Harry Granick

WILD in youth,
Pouring into the night
A hazy, luminous purpose
Born in a bedded fire,
Whither so eager?
Where are you whirling, you beautiful zest?
And what shall your sudden sparks flying
Find for their reckless ambition?

For out on the verge of the wind,
That impersonal whimsy,
Your glow is reduced to black rage
In alchemical reverse.
You falter. . . . Your purpose forgotten. . . .
Your spirit grown feckless,
Cold in a raining ash,
Falls beneath moonlight.

Dream-stripped, agèd, and futile,
You undulate into the wind
And somewhere — sometime —
Without gleam,
Without sigh,
Without sorrow,
Vanish into the night . . . the stars . . .
Eternal . . . Oblivious.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THE SUN IN SPLENDOUR

## By Thomas Burke

### PART I

AT a quarter to four on a Sunday afternoon in that section of North London which marks the beginning of London's northward urge, the sky, which had held the hue of washed turquoise, changed suddenly to the steeliness of imminent rain, and, in two minutes, to something inky and sodden. No wandering clouds were about; the sky itself was one spongy cloud. It brought with it a hush, an expectancy. Under the swarthy light, streets and alleys and buildings assumed quick changes of outline and color. What had been blurred became sharp, and prominent features became merged into their environment. St. Pancras, at one moment clear to the eye in stereoscopic detail, dissolved in the next moment into cloud. Slate roofs became black, red chimneys turned to yellow. From the south came a low rumble; horses grew restive; the feel of the air was discomforting.

There was a pause of some minutes. Then, over the roofs of the city, rode the storm. Across the negroid sky shot a spear of white flame; four seconds later, a long crash of thunder; and then more lightning. The spears dipped into the metallic twilight of the streets and alleys of Islington, and played wantonly among the chimneys and the spires; and fast upon them the thunder rolled, and the light worked its changes, hiding and revealing, until the townscape seemed a living thing.

Nearer now came the thunder, and for a space of seconds the sky was a sheet of copper streaked with fire. Across Pentonville the roars reverberated, cracking the ear, and the lightning stung the eyes. Under this assault church spires and smoke stacks were dwarfed and futile; things of no more account than the cottages of Camden Passage. The rising smoke was pallid and sickly, and had a spire or tower collapsed the disaster in that air would have been as impressive as the demolition of a house of cards in the nursery.

At last, announced by a sharper burst of noise and lightning, came the rain. It came in full force in the first minute. There was no introductory shower, no flourish of gentle drops, but a sudden release of water. From the windless sky it dropped like a monstrous gauze curtain, and under it all color vanished, all change of sky and townscape was arrested. All became neutral, merged in one vast spasm of wetness. Upon roof and road it fell, hissing as it fell. In a few minutes the open spaces sank beneath it and became little lakes. It flowed in ripples from the houses and from broken spouts, and grey walls shimmered in the cadaverous light that it made. It streamed from windows and dripped from cabs and buses. It beat brown mud from the pavements and black mud from the roads and yellow mud from the gravel walks. It made rivers of wheel ruts, and the rivers carried



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

argosies of paper refuse, which sailed downhill to the gulleys.

For ten minutes it persisted. Then, abruptly as it began, it stopped, as at a word of command, and retired, leaving the sky wan and exhausted, and the streets filled with a cold white light. Five minutes more, and wet streets were the only sign of it. Again the sky was blue, and the sun was free, shining upon pinnacles and chimneys and discovering the many hues of their encrustations of soot and dirt, and upon the roofs and walls, lighting their weather stains to many colors. It shone upon the soiled grey of the streets and upon the worn parks, and lent them a false convalescence. It shone upon the infelicitous suburbs, and where the chimneys sent out smoke, it played among it and transfigured it.

Into it, as it fell slanting across Islington High Street, came creeping from Camden Passage a little girl of eleven. She came along hugging the wall, as though engaged on some criminal errand, jerking quick looks behind her. She wore no coat, and her torn frock was dripping rain onto her bare legs and her cotton socks, and her woollen cap was dripping rain onto her ginger curls. But she did not seem concerned with this: her face was set toward "The Sun in Splendour", and as she reached its iron trellis gate she stopped, shook herself, and waited.

She had the air of keeping an appointment. Social workers, wearing social blinkers, would have said she was waiting to lead an intoxicated father home; they would not have been competent to conceive any other reason for the presence of a child outside a public house. But this was not her purpose, for the bars were long closed, and she had no relations given to drink. For some seconds she stood still against the gate; then, with a jerk, she moved her head as though some outside force had moved it. A loud voice reached the street and her ear: "Put out the Haydn Quartet in D." Then: "No — half a mo' — put out the Mozart in D. And don't take all day over it."

She moved from her shelter and looked up at the front of the house, and as she looked up, two men, one stout and short, one long and thin, turned the corner where the power station stands between Upper Street and the High Street. Each carried a violin case. They were not walking: they were marching as in procession. She gave them the look that one gives to the expected and the regular; then moved to the sweetstuff shop next door, leaned against its sill, and became busy with her finger nails. The two men stopped at the private door of "The Sun in Splendour", and the tall one pulled a bell knob that was set six feet from the ground beyond the reach of small boys. The door opened. The child looked from the sweets shop to this door, and saw a dark boy of about twelve, wearing grey Norfolk jacket and knickerbockers, white india rubber collar and blue bow tie; a boy whom she saw daily in the streets but who never played in the streets, or mixed in their rough and tumble, being always hampered by a violin case.

The door flashed open; the two men entered; the door flashed back; and the street was dead, and the child alone. But still she did not move; still she seemed expectant.

This quarter of the north is a quarter of squares and terraces and crescents that once were the homes of the affluent. Sixty years ago they were centres of middle class fashion. They were correct. They were in the movement. Their postal addresses had the right ring. Families lived in them through three generations, and so lent them an

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

illusion of permanent estate. Hosts and guests were sober people who talked soberly of the Funds. Today, deserted by respectability, which has transferred its favor to the streets of Bloomsbury and Victoria, whose houses once were centres of squalid commerce, they survive in unregarded decay. They have not the charm of antiquity, whose relics are warmed by a breath of the eternal: they have no place with today and no place with the past: nothing of sorrow or of beauty. They are only out of date.

That is what has happened to Islington High Street; it has fallen from main street to ignoble byway. At its beginning it has the air of a High Street, but at the point where it is met by Upper Street the decline sets in; it runs behind a group of island buildings, growing narrower and meaner, until it slinks away and hides its disgrace in a narrow alley called Camden Passage. It stands aside, ragged and worn; despised and conscious that it is despicable, while Upper Street, the usurper, splendid in breadth and plateglass shops, receives its custom and its traffic.

Now toward its end, where it wanes into Camden Passage, stood "The Sun in Splendour"; and those who lived in its narrowness used to say that you could always "tell" a stranger in that street by the way he would stop and stare at "The Sun in Splendour". He would see a shabby and ill conditioned public house, if he saw it at all, and would be passing on, when through the thin wrangling of bells and the drone of buses his ear would be startled by soft harmonies and gracious phrases from violin and cello that had no perceived associations with dirty High Streets or with Islington or with suburban Sundays or with "The Sun in Splendour" or with its broad and typical landlord, David Scollard. He would stop and stare and wonder. The neighbors didn't stop and stare. At first, the eccentricity of a cello playing landlord had excited some comment, but he and it were now accepted, and the music made by him and his friends was appreciated. They didn't understand it, but they knew that it was good music, and that David Scollard was a little out of the ordinary. He gave a bit of tone to the street.

But the child outside didn't know that he was out of the ordinary. She knew very little. She only knew that music came from that upper window on Sunday afternoons and on the evenings of two weekdays; music that was different from pianos and gramophones; and from four to five, in saturated clothes, she leaned against the sill of the sweets shop, listening. She listened as animals and the less intelligent humans listen — head on one side, eyes lifted, mouth open; all ears, as they say. She was as near to seeing God as humans ever are, though she didn't know it. She only knew that this was her greatest joy — to stand outside "The Sun in Splendour", and listen. She didn't know that she was hearing Mozart and Haydn and Beethoven and Brahms; she only knew that she was pleased and sad and excited; and she saw nothing and heard nothing but the phrases that trickled and flowed from that window.

She heard no footsteps behind her. She saw no lean old woman with lean black hair, long black skirt, black mantle, and black hat coming toward her. The lean face of this figure had deep jaws and a high flush, and in the eyes a dusky sparkle that did not belong to sun and air; and the clothes were not of this period. The woman walked as though she, too, were on an errand, and she looked straight before her. The child was standing, half

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

turned, with hands clenched, hearing the second movement of the Beethoven Quartet in F, and purring. Then the purr stopped, her hands drooped, and her legs shook. A lean hand gripped her shoulder and twisted her round, and her eyes looked into the eyes of Mrs. Greenspan.

"Ah — there you are, dearie. Eh?" The grip tightened and the lips smiled. The voice was low and the tone caressing. "Thought I told you to wash up them things — eh? Perhaps I forgot. Mooching about in the streets and getting wet — eh? What you doing here — eh?" The voice thickened. "What would Jesus think if he saw his little lamb outside a public house? You come with me, duckie."

The hand shifted to the back of the neck and propelled her. The child made no response, no sound. The woman loomed over her. Her lips wrestled with each other. Domination crouched in her eyes. She had this child in her grip, and it was pleasant. She held her and grinned upon her as gluttons grin upon a set dinner table. "Ah — just you wait till I get you home. Now — march!"

At arm's length she pushed the shivering thing down the High Street, into Camden Passage, and round a corner.

In the upper parlor of "The Sun in Splendour", while the last of the storm lashed the windows, Christopher Scollard was obeying orders and putting out parts for the Mozart Quartet in D. The parlor had not been designed or appointed for chamber concerts, but it was used only as concert room; and for years afterward, whenever Christopher saw or heard the word "music", it evoked at once the dusty smell of sofa cushions and last week's flowers, and a vision of himself laying out parts for a quartet.

He took out four metal music stands from behind a violently patterned screen, and set them in the centre of the room. In front of three of them he set chairs. Then he went on his knees, tongue thrust out, groping under the plush sofa among piles of tattered music sheets. He fought with them. He dragged them out and banged them, and they answered jets of dust. He tossed and pulled and shuffled them, muttering to himself, and wiping dust from his hands. In the conduct of the house and the bar his father compelled, "System. System. That's all you want. System and method." The music library was his personal application of System. Keep it under the sofa; then you know where it is.

He took a sheet here and a sheet there, until he had collected first violin, second violin, viola, and cello parts. He allotted them to the stands, and opened the first leaf of each. "First fiddle there — that's you. Viola there — that's you. Cello there — that's you. And second fiddle here — that's me." He stood back and surveyed the arrangement. "Huh! Little more to the left, you. That's it. Wah!" He dragged his violin case from under the sofa, took the violin out, tuned it, and said, "Wah." He had then nothing to do until the musicians arrived; and this promising juvenile, whose work was to become known in distant countries, began to pass the time. He blew a bubble from his mouth and tried to catch it. He stood on one leg and pirouetted. He stood in front of the stands and conducted an imaginary orchestra, asking for piano, forte, crescendo, and diminuendo. He went to his father's chair, and played an imaginary cello. "Da-diddy-day-da-diddy-doom-doom." He took his violin bow and tried to balance it on the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

middle of his forehead. He took two of the chairs and did parallel bar exercises between them. He turned a sheet of the viola music. "Let's see how you go. Mmmmmmm-eeeeee-aaaaah-mmmmmm." He bent sideways to the music stand, drew a deep breath, and tried to turn the leaves by puffing. He put his hands in his pockets, and did a double shuffle round the room. He went to the mirror over the mantlepiece, and pulled his eyes down with the fingers of one hand and his nose up with the fingers of the other. He saluted himself, insulted himself, beamed at himself. He took a paper weight (a present from Hastings) from a side table, and played hopscotch with it across the carpet. He lifted the carpet, looked underneath it, and said, "Dust." Then — "Dost thou understand?" He went to the window, said "Rain", and began to hum a forbidden playground song concerning Rain and Steam.

At the sound of approaching steps he craned his head. "Here they come. The long and the short of it. Plum-pudden and daddy-long-legs. That silly kid'll get soaked. Soaked. Oak-boak-doak-soaked."

He went from the window and down the stairs, two at a time, to the private entrance. As the bell jangled, he was there to open. The bell continued to jangle, wearily, for twenty seconds before it died. The long and the short nodded and entered, rubbing boots and shaking themselves.

The short one said, " . . . 'M, Chris."

"Afternoon, Mr. Frumpin. Afternoon, Mr. Darkless. Get wet?"

"Nothing to worry about. We're all right."

They went up.

In the parlor, with cello between his legs, sat a man of the forty six style and build that rides in every bus and tram. He was broad, with big head, big face, and shiny brown hair. He wore no coat, and his yellow vest and white shirt sleeves, the stiff cuffs rolled back, made against the patterned screen a storm of color. He had slow, contemplative eyes, and the sensitive mouth of a man who has an opinion of himself and cannot live up to that opinion.

As they entered he was tossing little phrases from his bow. He looked round and said, "Ah." Frumpin did not say "Ah." He said "Ha!" Between the two there was a whole gamut of character. "That Mozart thing, eh?"

"Mm."

They opened their cases and produced instruments. For some seconds the room was filled with a jangle of E A D G. Frumpin, tuning, said, "Wonder what that kid's doing outside your place, in all the rain. Seen her there before. Not one of your fancy girls, I hope, Chris? Eh? 'M. 'M. 'M."

"Me? Not likely. I've seen her, too. Lives back of Camden Passage, I think."

They sat down. They had not come to talk, but to work, and the Joachim, the Flonzaley, and the London Quartets did not sit down more seriously than these three men. Frumpin made one fat remark about his short legs and the chair and his stomach; then nonsense was banished. Scollard was a publican. Frumpin was a Liverpool Road grocer. Darkless was an accountant's clerk. But somehow, when they sat down with their instruments, they were changed men. Even Chris was not the boy he had been while waiting for them. They were no longer solitary souls: they were merged into each other and into music. All they knew about music or about their instruments they

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had learned from local orchestral players. They were not musicians, but they were passionate disciples. They spoke softly as though they were being overheard by Mozart. They turned the leaves of their music sheets softly, and peered across each other and hummed. It seemed that a trial was about to open in which they were the prisoners and the music was the judge. Chris took his place, standing on one foot, rubbing the calf with the boot of the other, and adjusted his fiddle to hand and chin. He gave half an eye to his part: he had played it before and knew what he had to do, and that he could do it; just as he knew — though he didn't know how he knew — that his father couldn't and never would play the cello.

Frumpin looked at Mr. Scollard. "Ready, David?"

"Half a mo'."

There was a noise of slippers and a rustle of dress. Mrs. Scollard entered, with bright nods, splendid in lilac silk, lace, scent, gold chain, pearl necklace. She jingled as she subsided. She smoothed her dress with two large hands; she made a little swallowing noise. Then the jangling and the creaking of corsets ceased, and she prepared to suffer, for David's sake, her weekly classical chamber concert.

David looked at Frumpin. "'M? . . . *Now!*"

The spell was broken by the jangling of the spring bell. Mrs. Scollard got up brightly. "Ah — there they are! Now — tea, eh?" She went out. David Scollard looked at her as a child looks at nurse preparing bed. He got up slowly, with lumbering movements, and slowly reached for a green baize cover. He drew this with conscious care over his cello, and tied it at the scroll. He gave a sigh and a grunt. He got up as one who had fought a splendid battle in which he had been a splendid loser. He did not leave the quartet; he emerged from it, defeated but unbowed. Christopher packed his instrument in his case, and waited. Frumpin and Darkless got up slowly, and packed their instruments. Frumpin fastened his case, and with the idea of saying something, barked, "Well . . ." Scollard answered with "Ah . . ." The splendor faded from him. He was to face another battle — the weekly tea party — in which he would be the victor — the miserable victor.

"Great stuff", said Frumpin, and coughed and grunted.

"Ah."

They fidgeted. Christopher collected the parts, and stowed them under the sofa, and moved the stands into the corner. When that was done the room seemed suddenly empty and sterile: the Sunday afternoon of Suburbia fell upon it like a feather bed. Five minutes ago the three men had been musicians; now, with instrument cases in their hands, they were men with instrument cases. They looked about them as though they were half awake.

Scollard stood aside at the door as the two others passed out. He looked as though he would like to hold them back, but a voice below cried, "Tea's getting cold, David"; and David jerked his shoulders and lumbered downstairs. He opened the side door for them.

"Wednesday then."

"Righto. Wednesday. Ta-ta."

"So long."

From the door of the lower parlor came a continuous bubbling of high tones and bass. He stood for some moments looking at the door with that air of irritation a man wears when he knows he is going to be irritated. He

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stretched his right hand to open it; then, remembering something, withdrew it, and used his left hand. Christopher was often catching him at tricks of this sort. When he went out for his morning stroll, he always put on a pair of battered brown boots which he changed directly he came back for a respectable black pair; and he always took off and put on the right boot first, and did not lace them until both boots were on. He always stepped from the front door with left foot first, and, coming home, always walked on the opposite pavement, and crossed over as he reached the house. He took sugar with his right hand and salt with his left, and if these things were by accident set on the wrong side of his plate, he changed them over before using them. He always put his hat on before his overcoat, and if, in a fit of absence, he put the overcoat on first, he would take it off before putting on his hat. He had a regular order for dressing — pants first, then socks, then vest. If he got them in the wrong order, he took them off and started again. Queer things, fathers.

The parlor table was set for tea, the company was set about it, and the tea poured. A suspended lamp of white china dropped a golden halo upon the table and upon neat Sunday heads and faces, blessing the company and banishing the rest of the room to darkness. There was his wife. There were his boys — Christopher and Eric. There was his wife's brother, Fred Gore. There was Mrs. Gore. And there was Lois. They stopped bubbling and looked up. Mrs. Gore wagged a large face at him, and was vivacious. "Ah — here's Dad. And how's Dad?"

As Scollard stood over his wooden smokeroom chair at the head of the table, he paused again, and looked sideways as though he had never seen this collection of creatures before.

He saw his wife. Erect, pink, forty four. Small and plump. Of easy disposition, yet capable of lightning strokes of temper. Holding her opinions between her teeth. Efficient by instinct rather than by thought or care. Moving through life without fret, yet with a perpetual note of puzzle in her voice. Talking almost always like a parrot, and behaving always like a wise woman. The eternal wife; the eternal mother.

He saw his eldest — Eric, a gawk of sixteen; and saw a tortured soul that had neither voice nor wings; a thick floundering thing that weighed him down and bruised him. His mother couldn't understand him; her phrase for him was, "Really — that boy . . . really I don't know. . . ." But what she didn't know she never told. It was as though Eric lived with some dark secret.

Christopher. . . . He was nearer to Chris than to any. Eric had flatly refused to touch violin, piano, or any instrument, and the few attempts of early years to force him to it had ended in a physical rough-and-tumble; but Chris had "taken" to the violin when his first halfsize instrument was put into his hands. Those hands indicated music by their shape. His black flat hair, his thin lips, his pinched face, betrayed the artist. He, too, was reticent, but it was the right reticence; always the gleam was shining from it, warm and lambent. He was "ordinary", within his mother's grasp; often wrapped up, but wrapped up, she felt, in wholesome dreams. There was an elfin vulgarity in the twinkle of his eye, and in his trick of flicking one corner of the mouth at Eric by way of comment on the follies of these elders. He was the true musician. He did not consciously love music, or live for

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

music, any more than he loved or lived for bread and meat; but he could not have lived without it. He never thought about it: it was as much a part of his every day as his boots and shirt and collar.

It was his father, the dabbler, the incompetent, who lived for it, thought about it and talked daily of the glory of Beethoven and the grace of Mozart and the marvel of Paganini; of the great spirits who received the message of beauty direct, without taint or corruption. Chris was his father's hope; his hope of *doing* something in the world; moving out of the groove of the infelicitous and the inane. There was no hope now for himself; that dream was ended; he was a publican and would finish as a publican; but perhaps, through Chris, some echo of it might be granted to him.

Slow in his movements, the boy was all quiver within. Staring straight ahead, with sleepy eyes, he observed everything around him. His mind was clay, receiving dints and impressions from words and looks and gestures and silences and atmospheres. Like most children, he knew his father better than his father knew him.

Fred Gore. The dull fool. An animal mass without spark or flame, bursting out of morning coat, cream waistcoat and cream spats. Red face, slate mustache touched yellow with smoke, yellow-grey hair, big hands that were always washing, loud thin voice, flapping gestures, and a mind that fed heartily on the fatuous and the inane without nourishment. The amused contempt that he had for David Scollard was returned by Scollard as the mild disgust of a sensible man for the jovial oaf.

Julia Gore . . . thin, sharp featured, with the tight hair of a young servant. The counterpart of her husband in noise and fluster, but conscious of her deficiency and indecently ready to confess it to the world. She wallowed in publishing her lack of sense and her selfmade mishaps. Seldom did her character stand upright. She blundered through life, either falling or picking herself up, and thrusting out hands to Emily Scollard for help. She talked on a falsetto note, and was quick in resentment. She thrust her sayings at her listeners with open fingers, as though she were toasting them. When amused she made clucking noises. (Scollard had named her the Buff Orpington.) But now he saw them all arrested in their topmost poise; and he saw this breathless, jabbering woman as a mazed child learning to walk on a strange floor among strange furniture.

And Lois Deeming. There she sat with her pale brow, brown curls and big brown eyes; such eyes as you see in babies and race horses; deep and full of ripple, reflecting everything and revealing nothing; a beautiful and empty shell. Lois was the mystery and the problem of this household. Nothing was ever said in the family; much was understood. There had been a younger sister of Mrs. Scollard's whose name was never spoken; and there had been an affair. There had been frantic secrecies, fierce reproaches, questionings, storms, and banishment to a country cottage. There the mother had died while giving birth to a girl whose mind had gone to sleep at ten years old. From the age of four she had been in the Scollards' care, and now at eighteen acted efficiently as general domestic help. Mrs. Scollard understood her. She could talk her child language, and could follow the erratic slants of her intelligence; and the child worshiped her and followed every word and wish. She made agonized efforts to learn, and agonized

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

efforts to suppress the giggle that Mrs. Scollard didn't like. She had the steadfast face and carriage of a serious child moving toward womanhood and conscious of the extreme gravity of mere existence; and daily, when her work was done, she read the kind of book given as school prize to ten-year-olds. Lois — the beautiful and the baffling. The others he saw clearly, but not Lois. Even the flash of light could not discover the secrets behind those velvet eyes. She was at once crystal and impenetrable.

As in that instant he comprehended the table, the thought came to him, "Wonder what'll happen to this lot?" Then, before he was fully aware of the flash, it was gone, and he sat down; and the mechanism of the Sunday afternoon cranked into action, and his normal attitude returned. He was David Scollard, licensed victualer, entertaining his wife's relations whom he detested. . . .

At midnight these people slept. In "The Sun in Splendour" five immortal souls troubled the dark air with their quivering. The tormented soul of David Scollard, forcing him to grope after beauty that went to dust wherever he touched it; the half awake soul of Christopher, turning and turning in mazes of wonder; the uneasy soul of Eric that wanted to see light and could not; the quiet and unquesting soul of Emily Scollard; and the dumb and shackled soul of Lois Deeming. They were in travail, though they did not know that they were doing anything more than trying to arrange matters with the world to give them happiness and success. Their souls went searching for it, in shapes of passion and dismay; and the darkness of that house held the shadows of the secret beauty that lies behind perceived beauty and makes for every soul the banners of its pilgrimage and battle.

*(To be continued.)*

## POINTS OF VIEW

By Amy Lowell

YOUTH cocks his hat and rides up the street.
Age cocks his eye only to see it.

Youth puts his horse at a five barred gate.
Age chuckles grimly and sits down to wait.

Youth limps by with a broken kneed horse.
Age, through the shutters, mutters "Of course!"

Youth curses Fate for his splitting head.
Age lights the candle and hobbles to bed.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# OLD CHRISTMAS MORNING

*A Kentucky Mountain Ballad*

By Roy Helton

*Illustrated by Edward Shenton*

"WHERE you coming from, Lomey Carter,
So airly over the snow?
And what's them pretties you got in your hand,
And where you aiming to go?

"Step in, Honey: Old Christmas morning
I ain't got nothing much;
Maybe a bite of sweetness and corn bread,
A little ham meat and such.

"But come in, Honey! Sally Anne Barton's
Hungering after your face.
Wait till I light my candle up:
Set down! There's your old place.

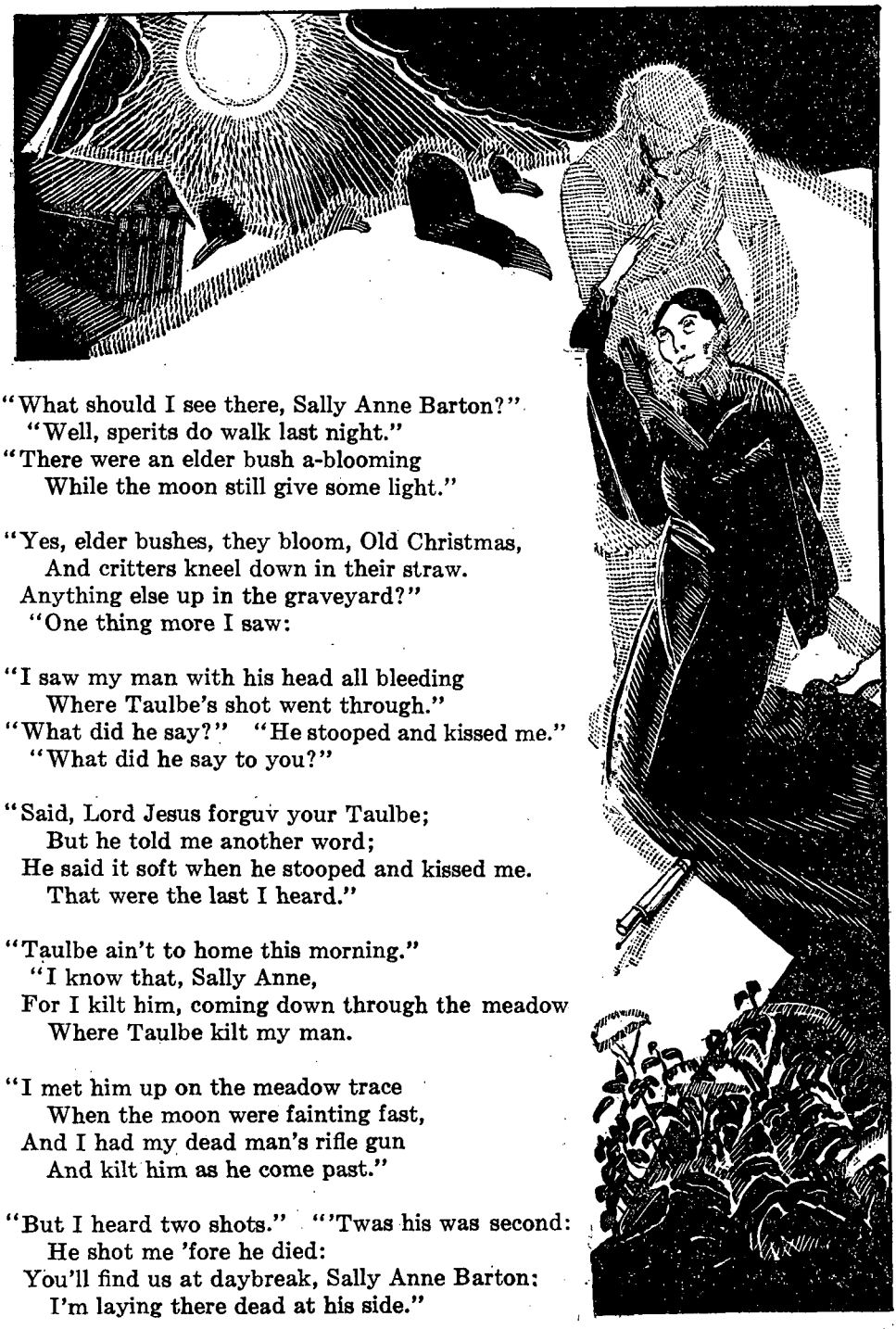
"Now where you been so airly this morning?"
"Graveyard, Sally Anne.
Up by the trace in the salt lick meadows
Where Taulbe kilt my man."

"Taulbe ain't to home this morning . . .
I can't scratch up a light:
Dampness gets on the heads of the matches;
But I'll blow up the embers bright."

"Needn't trouble. I won't be stopping:
Going a long ways still."
"You didn't see nothing, Lomey Carter,
Up on the graveyard hill?"



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"What should I see there, Sally Anne Barton?"
"Well, sperits do walk last night."
"There were an elder bush a-blooming
While the moon still give some light."

"Yes, elder bushes, they bloom, Old Christmas,
And critters kneel down in their straw.
Anything else up in the graveyard?"
"One thing more I saw:

"I saw my man with his head all bleeding
Where Taulbe's shot went through."
"What did he say?" "He stooped and kissed me."
"What did he say to you?"

"Said, Lord Jesus forguv your Taulbe;
But he told me another word;
He said it soft when he stooped and kissed me.
That were the last I heard."

"Taulbe ain't to home this morning."
"I know that, Sally Anne,
For I kilt him, coming down through the meadow
Where Taulbe kilt my man.

"I met him up on the meadow trace
When the moon were fainting fast,
And I had my dead man's rifle gun
And kilt him as he come past."

"But I heard two shots." "'Twas his was second:
He shot me 'fore he died:
You'll find us at daybreak, Sally Anne Barton:
I'm laying there dead at his side."



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# SIR WILLIAM AND ALL THE LITTLE GILBERTS

## By Gilbert W. Gabriel

SOMEONE who reviewed the only fair-to-middling production of "Princess Ida" here last season pointed out one pleasant truth: that no Gilbert and Sullivan revival can ever be called utterly a failure. The wit and beauty of their work abide, turning all praise of them into quite useless axiom, and furnishing the present and the future with examples sternly, brightly, it would seem miraculously perfected. Say Amen to that. If you do not, you are doomed to have the point smashed across your pate by means of a number of excerpts from the works of those who, coming after them, tried to be Gilberts and Sullivans, or tried to escape being them, and made as big a botch in either endeavor.

For this is to be a study of comic opera librettos since Sir William Gilbert's, rather than of Gilbert's own. If it goes first through the motions of repeating some of the history and appreciation of the Savoy operas, it is only for the sake of securing the sources of difference between Gilbert and his descendants, between master and mongers.

"Today", said Beaumarchais — and it was not so distant a day, either — "whatever is not worth saying is being sung." Perhaps it had already been divinely intimated to the disgusted author that his greatest work would end up as two opera librettos. Just then, at any rate, one of his composers, Mozart, was delivering himself of the precept that, "In an opera the poem must unquestionably be the obedient daughter of the music." What Mozart thought the nicest plan was "for a good composer, who understands the stage and can himself take a certain initiative, to combine with a clever poet as a veritable phœnix." Just how much understanding of the stage and certain initiative was to be allowed his clever poet, too, Mozart declined to stipulate. His librettists must have been docile hacks. The very best of them ended up as a sad pamphleteer and instructor in a young New York college.

The musician speaks again in Richard Wagner, who wrote his own librettos: "I would never choose a subject that could just as readily be wrought into a spoken drama by some clever theatre poet!" This condescension of composers toward clever poets is positively staggering. It makes you wonder whether, in the course of publishing Sullivan's letters, his editors did not kill off an occasional disclosure of what Sir Arthur really thought of the relative importance of Sir William. They quarreled, but not that way.

For their several joinings and partings must have assured them both of the providential genius which lay in their partnership, and in none other. You can no more sing a Sullivan excerpt without at least hazarding the Gilbert words to it than you can recite a Gilbert lyric without the more or less accurate Sullivan tune bubbling in your throat. Heaven knows what double headed agonies they went through in deciding their next subject:



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

once they found it, however, it would be as significant for words as for music. And that, by the way, happens to be what Wagner finally chose as the desk motto of his own dual labors.

We know pretty well what started Gilbert off on some of his plots. At the oft reported O. P. Club dinner in 1906 he handsomely admitted "his indebtedness to the author of the 'Bab Ballads', from whom he had unblushingly cribbed". Indeed, Robert Bell made notes, which Gilbert himself confirmed and amplified, on the pedigrees of a few of the more popular operas. "Pinafore", we are confessed to, traces back to "Captain Reece", "The Baby's Vengeance", "General John", "Lieutenant-Colonel Flare", "The Bumboat Woman's Story", "Joe Golightly", and "Little Oliver". "The Yeomen of the Guard" owes this and that to "Annie Protheroe" and "To Phœbe". "Patience" began, it may be presumptuous to remind you, as the ballad of "The Rival Curates", who, in the course of transportation to the stage, went through a process of unfrocking and redressing in arty velvet knickers, in order that Gilbert and Sullivan might have a slightly belated but none the less swift kick at the rear guard of the precious pre-Raphaelites.

They were after targets at which to squirt their special blend of ridicule, always. They did not always find one. They kept satire well sealed up, for instance, when they made "The Yeomen of the Guard". But "The Yeomen" is to their works what "A Tale of Two Cities" is to Dickens's: the romantic, somewhat relenting exception. The rule still holds. Their first resolution must have been to find a subject worthy and needy of their merriment. Mark that, for it marks in turn the impotence of their apers. Even in "Ruddigore" their mock of the saws and maledictions of old melodrama would be joyous beyond all twiddling of sentiment and sex in musical comedies to come.

When they were credited (or discredited, as Gilbert said twenty years later) with this one conspicuous failure of "Ruddigore" — which, of course, it was not, for it really ran eight months, put $35,000 into his pocket, and came back in recent years for most amazingly popular revivals — George Edwardes was foolish enough to write a letter to the papers about it. Mr. Edwardes was manager of the Gaiety Theatre, and he kindly suggested that "Ruddigore" might have been less of a failure had its comedians been allowed to "gag" their lines, as was the custom at *his* theatre. Gilbert quite as kindly and calmly replied that the ideals aimed at in the Savoy were not precisely those aimed at in the Gaiety. Mr. Edwardes had no answer ready. Possibly he knew that his would be the eventual victory. The usual musical shows of today are approximately Edwardes shows, certainly no better and perhaps no worse. They thrive on the Edwardes evidence that musical comedy might just as well let sleeping brains lie.

Two favorite plots Gilbert had. A Freud might have made ghastly deductions from his frequent recurring to the muddles of those who have been betrothed in infancy, and to the fates of switched babies. But an easier solution lies in the remembrance that these are the two ancient tales on which the grandest of grand operas drape their librettos. And, first to last, there is that in all Gilbert and Sullivan which twits the pomposity of grand operatic formulas and foolishnesses. You get it out and out in the extravaganza on Bellini's "Norma", entitled

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"The Pretty Druidess, or, The Mother, the Maid and the Mistletoe".

But, when this burlesquing is melted into the sheer sunniness of simple and delicious rhyming, it has a grace beyond and above all gibes. The cynical, slightly saliverous sprightliness of an Offenbach *bouffe* seems worldly and greedy for leers, compared with it. Here, with the green, pleasant health of open meadows in its eyes, and a wit all its own forever decorous upon its lips, the Gilbert and Sullivan mode has only to smile at the claptrap of opera. Opera does better than wither under that smile. It smiles back. I know no musical burlesque to compare with this special felicity of theirs, excepting you return to Arne's old "Temple of Dullness", Drury Lane of the year 1745, from which one glorious little spoof of an operatic lament will hint sufficiently whence came the fresh spirit of much at the Savoy, a century and a half later:

Oh walls, and glooms, and barbarous stones!
Dungeons unconscious of my moans!
Will ye not melt to set me free,
While from these eyes I shed a sea!

But "The Temple of Dullness" was a predecessor, and I have contracted to write about successors, instead. Not necessarily about the several well meaning and embarrassed gentlemen like Pinero, Burnand, and Sidney Grundy who tried to take Gilbert's place with Sullivan — Captain Basil Hood was much the best of these — but about librettists to other composers, down the years. When Sullivan was visiting New York, for example, he was invited to attend a Casino performance in English of Johann Strauss's exquisite soufflé, "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief". And this is what he must have heard by way of lyrics:

I've ever present to my mind
What me once much delighted.
'Tis what the youthful queen so kind
For supper serve one night did.

It may be rowdy to take advantage of the tortures of translation, but you simply must listen, likewise, to the Englishing of a chorus from "The Queen's Lace Handkerchief". Unless I am greatly mistaken it has to do with a bull fight:

When the bull fight calls, o-yo, o-yo, o-yo!
Shouts the Spaniard all aglow, o-yo, o-yo!
To the arena's gaping door
Youth and old age singing pour,
Dense and surging rolls the throng
To th'enchanted goal along;
The joy which entrances
Leaps out from bright glances;
The hour is at hand!
No place left to stand?
Haya, Caramba! Run, run!
Look, the fight's begun!

This seems to be a general rule of it: that no comic opera can ever be greater than the sum of its writers. The tragedy of the life work of the late Victor Herbert came from his lack of original librettists. For he himself was a prodigious jack-of-all-music, and the prolific tunefulness of all he wrote was bound, at last, to be colored by the commonplaces to which he had to set it. No libretto in his history ever did his talents justice, and there was only a possible, single one — "The Madcap Duchess", of which David Stevens and Justin Huntly McCarthy wrote the book and lyrics — which was at all worthy of its hire. Frankly Gilbertian as it is, the song of Tweedledum and Tweedledee from this romantic piece is an at least glib and witty galop in rhyming:

In affairs of state you must differentiate
When your facts and your fancies disagree.
For it takes intelligence to detect the difference
'Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

But you will begin to wonder what happened to these authors when they arrived at their passages of love:

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Oh, tell me, how shall I know the one, the only one,
Whose beauty a golden web has spun,
Whose radiant and heavenly graces
Like stars in Love's eternal spaces,
Shine?

When you begin to compare Gilbert with the others on the topics of love and marriage, that is always where the fun begins. The exquisite josh of balladry he could invent for serenaders is met by such stuff as this chorus from "The Prima Donna", which Henry Blossom battered out for Herbert:

For when you find the one
You've been looking for all your life
You will know in some strange way
That you've met your fate that day.
All is fair, the poets declare,
Both in love and war.
So just go in and win
When you find she's the kind
You've been looking for.

Comic opera, from Donizetti's day forward and backward, has always made great ado about wedding scenes. Here you have a definite hook on which to hang comparisons. Turn to the bridal strains in "The Yeomen" or in "Patience", with its

Greatly pleased with one another,
To get married we decide . . .

and the nonsensical loveliness of them in "Ruddigore":

Hail the bride of seventeen summers;
In fair phrases
Hymn her praises;
Lift your song on high, all comers.
She rejoices
In your voices . . .

Toward the close of "The Canterbury Pilgrims", that De Koven opera, quasi-comic, quasi-grand, founded on Percy MacKaye's play, listen now to the voice of one Chaucer:

Hymen, hymen, hover near!
Shed upon a bridegroom here
Showers of thy protecting stars
Where his Venus turns to Mars!

Is this not, after all, a rather heavy charge of mythology to shower on a bridegroom? Personally, I should prefer being bowled over by the nuptial finale of Harry B. Smith's libretto to dear old "Robin Hood", beginning:

Danger's past, and at last,
They'll be married; their love's steadfast . . .

The trick of the trade was already beginning to work openly on this best known of so many librettos by Mr. Smith. A milkmaid's chorus, for example, makes smooth and swift tripping, but it lacks the meat of any great spontaneity upon its bones:

We're exceedingly sure
We could never endure
Any life as fraught with friction;
And 'tis easy to see
That it's nicer to be
A milkmaid of fanciful fiction.

To return to the especially hymeneal passages of comic opera, however, I beg leave to quote from something called "Yokohama Maid", highly popular with entertainment committees who are satisfied with "something just as good":

Waiting expectantly for the bride
Under the cherry blossoms.
Will she come,
Sad and glum,
Will she her heavy heart hide?

To which bravely rhetorical question a later chorus replies:

Our hearts are wrung to see you stung,
But it just had to be, sir!
Hail, bride and bridegroom!
Hail, smiling pair!
As long as she is happy
With a U. S. A. young chappy —
We should care!

Indeed you should care. But this mention of the U. S. A. provokes another sally of comparisons. It is good, for once, to come across patriotics as jocular and freshmanlike as these, taken from Wallace Irwin's book for Walter Damrosch's "The Dove of Peace":

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It's painful to the Yankee soul
To spout a bit or shout a bit,
But here's hooray for U. S. A.,
The land of grit and granite,
We're from Missouri, likewise Maine,
We're here to pluck the flower of Spain,
And if you like we'll whip the world
Or any other planet!

But the George M. Cohan influence is too strong for most librettists when they turn into Dixie-Doodles and banner boys. Perhaps you will remember Stanislaw Stange's typical rabies of affection for his fatherland in "When Johnny Comes Marching Home", where, after much "graceful hopping, never stopping, tender squeezing, oh, quite pleasing", etc., and an equally giddy summons to "Hoity-toity, banish sadness, hoity-toity, welcome gladness", someone sues: "Let me acclaim the land I name, my own United States."

All of which needs the answer of only one or two quotations from Gilbert. "He is an Englishman" would inevitably be among them. Add to it, out of pure leniency, the finale of "Utopia Limited" (which is supposed to be the flattest work the Savoy ever saw), wherein the King of Utopia pays England this last compliment:

Oh, may we copy all her maxims wise,
And imitate her virtues and her charities;
And may we, by degrees, acclimatize
Her Parliamentary peculiarities!
By doing so, we shall, in course of time,
Regenerate completely our entire land —
Great Britain is that monarchy sublime,
To which some add (but others do not)
Ireland!

We have certainly come down a peg from the day when verses like those made only middling successes. Nowadays an Italian street song from out "Naughty Marietta", Rida Johnson Young's libretto, can become immediately famous even though it does little more than repeat the word "Napoli" six times over in six silly lines.

Time and again, the years which have passed since the last of the Gilbert and Sullivan premières have suggested the possibility of a return to some collaboration as vigorous and whimsical as theirs. It has never passed that stage of possibility, however. The Smith-De Koven partnership did not, and the fault was at least as much the composer's. The Wodehouse-Kern-Le Baron one achieved a few pretty and profitable romps at the Princess Theatre, and then gave up. Gelett Burgess tried in vain to hammer his excellent versifying into musical comedy routine. Arthur Guiterman will not even try; Noel Coward, Newman Levy, and their fellows of this younger day have found out that a drugged public no longer wants wit and fine rhyming unless it can have them in the little capsules of revue skits.

Perhaps it is neither a new Sullivan nor a new Gilbert who is lacking, but a new D'Oyly Carte. A manager, that is, who does not hold that every Semite in blackface is funny, *per se*, nor that every piece of coquetry is charming because it jingles "ankle" with "rankle", recalls every joke long since thrown out of the barroom, and undresses in the spotlight. When the Theatre Guild or some such well determined organization goes in for a genuine reconception of satirical operetta, then I think it likely that we shall have lyricists, humorists, and composers sufficient unto the day. Of course it will require daring. Worst of all, it will require asking your audiences to dare. For as Henry A. Lytton, the famous Jack Point and Koko, wrote in his memoirs of Gilbertian advice: "Give your audiences credit for humorous perception!"

And, until then, librettos will remain no more than a shrill, treble trilling in our everlasting fugue and variations on the theme of the female leg.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# COMPTON MACKENZIE AND HIS WORK

## By Sheila Kaye-Smith

FOR a week I have gazed across the sea at Compton Mackenzie's island home of Jethou. Every day I have planned to cross over, and every day I have been defeated, either by fog or wind or the failure of the only available motor boat on my own island. It is no joke, this Great Russell between Sark and Jethou, by no means to be negotiated by small craft in bad weather; and the Little Russell on the farther side between Jethou and Guernsey is not much better.

Compton Mackenzie has chosen to exile himself upon his island, and this is typical of both the man and his work. As a rule the average English man novelist can be found either in Chelsea or Bloomsbury, if he is not at the Savage Club. Going from one literary dinner party to another, you meet inevitably the same group. If you fail to get a word with Mr. J. D. Swinnerpole at the P. E. N. dinner you are not too greatly discouraged, because you are sure to meet him tomorrow evening at the After Dinner Club. But not so with Compton Mackenzie. If you were to miss him at one dinner you would probably not get a chance to see him again for a year at least, since his appearances in London are few and fleeting, and mostly connected with what is at present the great interest of his life, which is not literature but the gramophone.

This, again, is characteristic. Because he is himself a novelist, Mr. Mackenzie does not therefore believe that novel writing or even literature is the most important of the arts. He would give that honor to music, though he himself is no performer and serves his Goddess but in the most humble capacity.

Because he has kept out of the main stream of London literary life and kept himself free of the philosophies and conventions of literary people, there is about his work an originality and a freedom which can scarcely be found elsewhere in modern English literature. Perhaps the aloofness is the consequence of the originality and freedom rather than their cause, but no matter how these two may stand in relation to each other as cause and effect, there is no denying that Compton Mackenzie's position in modern English literature is unique. Even those who do not admire him as a novelist cannot accuse him of either tameness or conventionality, or of following in the steps of other men. It is perhaps this very independence which is responsible for certain looks askance that he gets from some quarters. The modern critical tendency is all for comparison and classification, but what are you to do with a man who one year writes a trilogy founded entirely on religious experience, and the next produces a serial for a penny daily? Personally I think it is glorious to be able to do both, and Mr. Mackenzie is the only living author who can.

When we look back on his career we see that from the beginning he has been a man unbound — unbound either by style or school or subject or environ-



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment. His first novel was historical, an elegant and charming recreation of the eighteenth century in Bath. "The Passionate Elopement" is a complete success in its own line. It attracted much attention and enthusiasm at the time of its publication, and the literary world waited for Compton Mackenzie to repeat himself. But where many another author would have been content to recreate, as his second effort, the eighteenth century at Tunbridge Wells or the seventeenth century at Oxford, the author of "The Passionate Elopement" leaped straight into modern theatrical life and gave us in "Carnival" the story of a typical showgirl of today.

"Carnival" astonished where "The Passionate Elopement" had delighted. Mr. Mackenzie's knowledge of theatrical life enabled him to give of it a picture which was sometimes almost too realistic for modern taste, yet over it all he cast the glamor which is peculiarly his, and which in my opinion is his greatest gift. Perhaps the glamor is more obvious in "Carnival" than in later novels — the lights are brighter and cruder. Personally I do not know how the book would reread. It is a tribute to it and the thrill of my first impressions that I have never dared to make the attempt. I could not face the risk of being disillusioned in "Carnival", and that is perhaps as great a compliment to the author as to say that I had read it again and again.

"Carnival" made Compton Mackenzie a famous novelist, and all literary England and America awaited his third novel.

"Sinister Street" is in many ways his most remarkable achievement. By its very nature (it was published in two volumes of about 200,000 words each), it is not so well constructed or so satisfactory as a work of art as "Carnival", but it is even more challenging and compelling. The critics, of course, found more to criticize. "Carnival" had been received with almost unanimous applause, it was both enthralling as a novel and glamorous as a work of art. It was almost impossible to criticize it, for the glamor had this remarkable quality, that it caught the critics too. But there was less glamor and less thrall in "Sinister Street". The detailed story of the youth and adolescence of a man "who will eventually become a priest", it has its languors and its disappointments. Michael Fane is more alive at some periods than at others. Also, in the necessary discarding of plot Mr. Mackenzie may have too defiantly ignored rules of construction.

Nevertheless the book is one of the most momentous novels published in England this century, and one which has the distinction of having started a new school in English fiction. For some time after it appeared the libraries were stuffed with the life stories of young men who went to school and then to college, and were abandoned by their authors on the threshold of adult life and love. This fashion has naturally passed, but "Sinister Street" may be said to have brought the "cradle to grave" novel once more among us — the story which is a straightforward record of a man's or woman's life rather than the pattern of its sensations and complications. This type of novel is of course one of the oldest types, but it had died out during the Nineties of last century, when French standards of technique prevailed. Mr. Mackenzie revived it with all the advantages of an improved technique, and may be said thus to have given us our modern picaresque.

His fourth novel, "Guy and Pauline", was also in a sense a new experi-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment, though it made use of characters and situations which had already been dealt with in "Sinister Street". Mr. Mackenzie, by the way, is one of those authors whose characters continue his lifelong friends; they are not discarded when the book is finished but are reintroduced and used again and again. On the advantages of the method I have never been able to make up my mind. Sometimes it is a disappointment rather than a delight to meet a much loved character on another occasion, but on the other hand it has given a new reality to fiction ever since Balzac wrote "La Comédie Humaine" — and Mr. Mackenzie's novels are a real *comédie humaine*. Michael Fane, Maurice Avory, Sylvia Scarlett, Father Dorward, and other personalities link up their diverse styles into a characteristic unity. "Guy and Pauline" has strong affinities with "Sinister Street", in that it is the story of a young Oxford man whom we have met before in the earlier novel; but in many ways it disappointed the admirers of the first book owing to the extraordinary constraint of its subject and situations.

Put baldly, "Guy and Pauline" is the story of a young Oxford man, not in very comfortable circumstances, who becomes engaged to a clergyman's daughter. For financial reasons their engagement drags on without any definite plans for marriage and is finally broken off. That is all the story, spreading through over three hundred pages. Those who wished for sensation, for the startling element at work in "Carnival" and "Sinister Street", were naturally disappointed; none the less to many of Mr. Mackenzie's critics "Guy and Pauline" is his masterpiece, because here his wonderful sense of glamor has really found its own. It is all very well to be glamorous when dealing with theatrical life, or even when dealing with life in the University, and certainly when dealing with the adventures in the underworld of a young man seeking a lady he once loved; but it is a very different matter to cast a glow as of magic and faery over the story of a very ordinary young man's abortive engagement to a clergyman's daughter. There is no sensation, very little incident, the characters have nothing startling about them either in the way of vice or virtue. One might say that the book did not contain enough incident even for a short story, and yet it triumphs. Not that it is in any way merely a *tour de force;* it is a genuine piece of literary construction and marks perhaps the climax of Mr. Mackenzie's artistic achievement.

There is a gulf fixed between "Guy and Pauline" and his later work, a gulf which yawns across the work of many a man, or indeed woman, novelist of this period, the gulf of the years 1914 to 1918. With Mr. Mackenzie it is dug deeper than with some; one would say that he has a greater sensitiveness to environment and contemporary life than most novelists, hence a necessity in his seclusion. After the war and his experiences in it — chiefly in connection with the Gallipoli campaign — it was impossible for him to write as he had written before; but his love for his old characters remained, and we find that his first novel after the silence is a reconstruction of the life of Sylvia Scarlett, that strange tantalizing woman who had appeared for baffling glimpses in "Sinister Street".

Frankly, the novel was a disappointment. The war seemed completely to have changed Mr. Mackenzie's style, and reading "Sylvia Scarlett" was like witnessing a cinematograph film very hurriedly shown. Sylvia rushes and darts about the Balkans and the Near East so that one scarcely seems to get

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

near enough to her for observation, and at the end of the book one feels one knows her less than at the end of "Sinister Street". Rather in the same style is "Sylvia and Michael" which followed. Looking back on them, I am not sure whether the fact of his having produced two novels like cinematograph films is not another instance of the artistic sensitiveness of Mr. Mackenzie's mind; to have sat down and written deliberately and brightly in the midst of those catastrophic years, or even immediately after them, would have argued an insensitiveness which he most definitely does not possess.

He followed the two Sylvia novels with again a new experiment. "Poor Relations" and its companion novel "Rich Relatives" are novels of humor alone. There has always been humor in Mr. Mackenzie's books; but here are two novels entirely given up to it, and he shows himself a master of the comic character and the comic situation.

His books seem now to follow each other more rapidly. "The Vanity Girl" is a not very successful return to the style of "Carnival". "The Seven Ages of Woman" is curiously colorless for Mr. Mackenzie. He seems to be growing hurried, almost impatient with himself and his art, to be unable to find a subject in which he is truly interested. Then suddenly he returns to his old manner and the old glamor reasserts itself, though not for every man to see, in his religious trilogy "The Parson's Progress".

With this trilogy many parted company with Mr. Mackenzie, but to some of the critics it is at last the long wished for return to his earlier manner. At last he has found a subject in which he is himself deeply interested and with which he is profoundly competent to deal. Just as there had been humor in his novels long before he wrote a novel which could be described as humorous, so there had been religion in his books before he came to write a novel which could be called religious. In the three novels which form the complete "Parson's Progress" the interest is exclusively religious. They are the spiritual history of a new Michael Fane — one Mark Lidderdale. Brought up and priested in the Anglican Church, he becomes involved in the more swashbuckling element of the Anglo Catholic Movement in the Church of England, and finally, after certain experiences in the war, revolts from Anglicanism and joins the Church of Rome. It is entirely a religious history, the human element being sternly subordinated; indeed where Mr. Mackenzie introduces what is known as "human interest" it is almost contemptuously, as if as a sop to his readers. This may account in part for the book's failure to reach many; it is too exclusively ecclesiastical. There are, however, certain rare moments when the ecclesiastical becomes the spiritual, and if those could have been matched by others in which the spiritual had met the human, the book could scarcely have failed to reestablish Mr. Mackenzie with his old audience. The politics and shop of religion must necessarily appeal only to a few; its wider issues as well as its most humble effects have power to rouse the many. Against this, one is astonished by Mr. Mackenzie's technical knowledge of the movements with which he deals. It is another point in which he differs from the majority of novelists of his day, whose ignorance of current religious thought is profound and who almost invariably misuse ecclesiastical terms, ignoring the fact that faith, like fiction, has its proper outward expression and technique.

On looking into the future, I feel that Mr. Mackenzie has already indicated

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the lines on which he will finally and fully express himself. Since "The Parson's Progress" he has given us "The Old Man of the Sea" and "Coral", the first a new departure, the second a fresh return to the "Carnival" manner. But the new way is but a bypath and the old seems now definitely at an end. With his understanding of modern life, of human love, and of that religious impulse which is both the synthesis of all human emotion and its unifying link with worlds beyond it, he has it in his power to write a novel greater than any which English literature has yet produced. It is this which makes him so profoundly interesting even when he is not giving us his best work. Personally I would rather read a bad novel by Compton Mackenzie than a good novel by any other modern novelist you could name. He has about him a vital quality which one knows some day will inevitably surprise one. I feel that he is bound sooner or later to produce something almost shockingly good; because, though perhaps his work has not yet achieved either the success or the greatness of some, he has capacities which no other living writer possesses. At the present moment he is still a young man, and in spite of his earlier successes I do not feel that he has written himself out or even attained his highest achievement. When he really does his best it will be something entirely beyond the matter of small emotion and careful technique that has come to be regarded as the best among us. He will probably achieve this success by a return to his earlier method, to the method most characteristic of him — that is, the method of "Sinister Street". But the return will not be in the same way as the start, for he has traveled far in the meanwhile and will bring his sheaves with him.

## PRODIGAL

By DuBosé Heyward

SOME day, when the stern seeker in my brain
Has ceased to drive me stumbling through the dark,
Dropping dead cinders for each faint new spark,
Only to see the new one wax and wane;
When all my dreams are numbered with the slain;
And wisdom, that egregious patriarch
Has told his last half truth, and left me stark;
I shall go home, I shall go home again.

Laughter will greet me, waiting in the hall;
And friendships will come trooping down the stairs,
Sweet as old rose leaves wrinkled in a jar.
Battles and loves will move me not at all.
There will be juleps, billiards, family prayers,
And a clean passport for another star.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THE AWAKENING

## By Stella Benson

*With Sketches by Theodore Nadejen*

*Though you dance, though you dance with kings*
*In the dew of a far lawn,*
*To the tune that a bird sings*
*In a wild dawn,*

*You must follow me now, nor hear*
*Again that sweet bird's cry.*
*No word to your dancers dear,*
*And no good-bye.*

*Come away to your cares and your kin,*
*Come away, come away . . .*
*To your square white house, ringed in*
*By a round white day.*

"YOU know I have fallen so low in the world", he said, "that I am not able to grasp the order of the things that have happened to me — I get confused as to which part of eternity came first. I can only tell you how I remember things, but you must bear in mind that I am not very good at remembering things — not, as you would say, the man I was. Only of course the point is that I wasn't a man — I was a god." He looked at me shyly and one of his feet trod on the other. If his eyes had once been a god's, they were less than a man's eyes now; they looked like fishes' eyes, being magnified by very thick glasses. "Yes, you may well look at me contemptuously", he went on. "As a god I should have been ashamed to create the man I am now. I have poor teeth and a lot of trouble with my digestion — but still I have my great days to remember. I was one of the old gods. A great many mountains . . . and roaring beasts . . . and dead cities and beautiful bodies have my seal upon them. I was quite a creator in my day. You know, you should not utterly despise a man who has made a mountain range. Of course I had very strong hands then — (look at them now) — and a very



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

strong heart — so strong that you wouldn't have recognized it as a heart; it was a world in itself — and now I can scarcely feel it beat. You can have no conception how a god can change. When we gods were young we made all lands and seas, and some of us were herdsmen and drove flocks of stars and suns away to pasture in space. It was only later we made man — when we had learned to be peevish and ingenious.

"But *I* was a mountain maker . . . I know all the writings on the flanks of mountains. . . . The stuff of mountains is such gracious material, so luminous with sound — so trembling with color. Mountains are like bells; they are tuned like bells. You'd know what I mean if you had made them. When a mountain is well made, even an incurably imperfect mortal ear can hear the bell note sometimes, especially when it rings to the touch of the last ray of the sun. A good mountain should be on a crescendo note. You put all the gentleness of your theme into the lower slopes, making them fit for mosses and grass meadows stroked with silver by the blowing of a summer wind. . . . Then as you add alp to alp and precipice to precipice, you mix the earth of stronger stuff — soil that will hold the trees so that their crests tear the cold misty winds to shreds. But the peak of the mountain has only to support the delicate memorial of perpetual snow . . . the peak is the ordeal of the creator. It is naked line, of course; though you be a poor workman you cannot cover up mistakes with easy trees. The peak must be eccentric and terrible and . . . witty, if you know what I mean. An epigram of a peak is best. Gods are so often judged by the peaks they throw against the sky."

He interrupted himself, shuffling nervously. "I expect that all sounds silly to you. We ex-gods have great difficulty in not being thought silly." He sighed and after a little while continued. "It was a funny thing . . . after I had made mountains for a long time, the glory seemed to go out of making noble things. 'Noble' began to be a word that we gods were ashamed of — like 'purity' . . . or 'beauty' . . . or 'truth' . . . . Mountains somehow were seen to be not very *smart* things to make. The gods of my set were so dreadfully clever. Of course I know now — looking at it from the detached standpoint of the ex-god — that we were already beginning to lose our first godship. The leprosy of mortality had already infected our strong hearts. Ah, why is it . . . why is it that gods must die . . . why is mortality such a relentless invader and rapture such a defenseless realm? You must excuse my excitement. . . all that survives of my divinity is sorrow . . . . I am so very old and cannot die, and you must remember that I have a very long and enormous youth to regret. Even mortals are a little immortal when they remember their youth; even men's sons are almost gods when they are young — and as for the old gods . . .

"Well, I was just telling you how clever we became. So articulate — so complex. . . . We began to have schools of complexity. We began to compete in making life crawl about our clean world. We began to invent the most intricate and ingenious bodies, and to thread pains and desires in and out of the veins and channels of sensation in those bodies. Of course you would think our first experiments very clumsy. My wife was reading in the encyclopædia yesterday about the history of watches — my dear wife has such a thirst for information — and I saw at once how similar the first old triumphant making of turnip-like time-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pieces was to our first experiments in creating living things. I well remember the first living creature I made. It was a lizard a hundred and forty feet long. It had almost no sense but it could propagate its kind in the most *ingenious* way — I should like to show you the diagrams of its propagating plan — but perhaps you know the idea already; the other gods stole the design . . . . I remember thinking that ingenuity in the lizard line could go no further — and yet look at the lizards they turn out nowadays — as small as a blade of grass and yet fitted with just the same conveniences as my first lizard — if not even better ones.

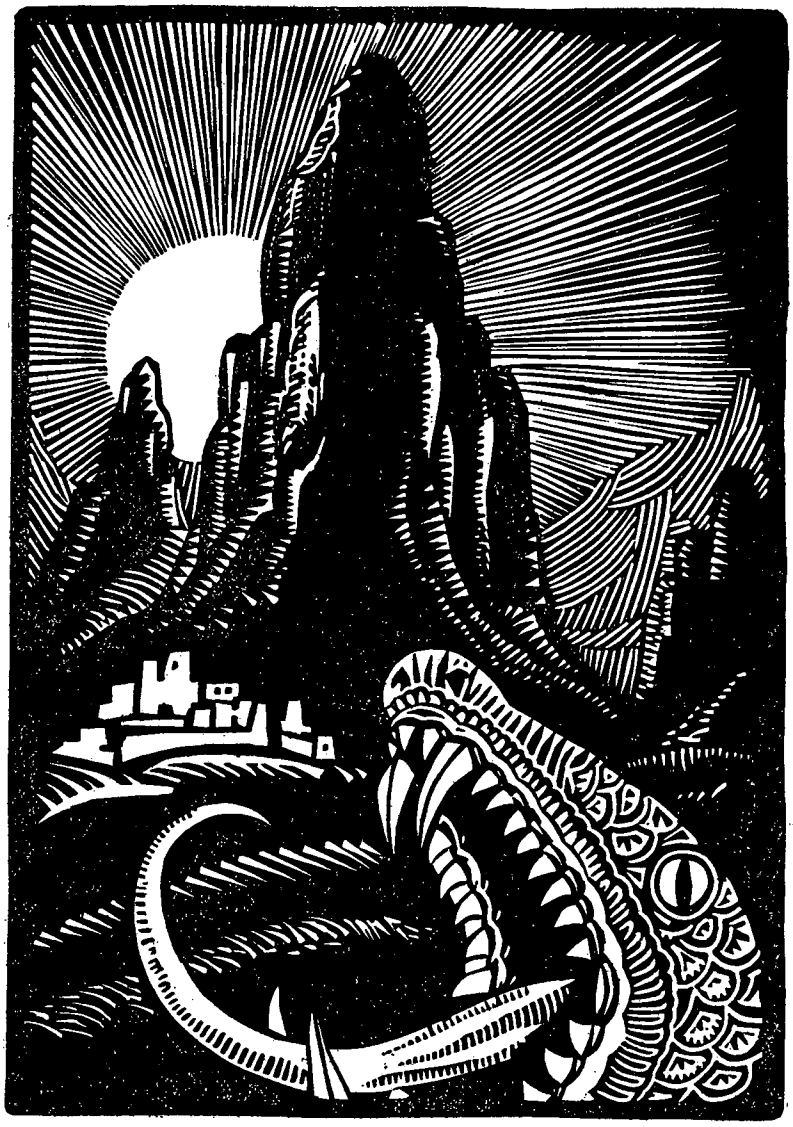
"Ah, what a pity that ingenuity crept in! Because at first, you see, grandeur was still in our thoughts; we had the habit of grandeur even though our hands were not so strong. The very size and crudeness of my lizard will show you that the mountain tradition was with me still. And life was still a side issue, with me. A kind of byproduct. I was still making true and strong things, though I had become more foolishly fastidious. At first I had simply pulled my mountains out of the stuff of the sea, rooting them in the dark water and crowning them naively with the bright sky — but now I had to make pedestals for my mountains; now I had to make room for my new creations; now I had to smooth out broad places for my rootless things to travel on. And so I learned to make deserts and to glaze them with odd deceiving air . . . rivers were my knives and with them I carved deep patterns in the hard land. And tenderness, which is, I suppose, the most beautiful symptom of weakening godship, taught me to care for my young fragile living things by hanging clouds before the cruel sun, by spreading safe meadows for unsteady feet. I learned to make flowers at that time too — the last grand work my hands ever accomplished.

"Gods made more and more fantastic experiments with life, but I forget who it was who first made man. I think it was the god of the Jews — his adherents now claim that he was the first and you will readily believe that not one of us is anxious to dispute so doubtful an honor. By the time man was first created, mortality was already incurable among us gods. In our imperfect hearing, mountains that had once been peals of bells strung upon the cords of our sky, seemed to jangle. I had begun to notice — you will laugh — that seas were dangerous and deserts empty. I could hunger and thirst on the face of my own continents. I could bend before my own storms. All the sorry signs of manhood were upon me, but of course I was still a god, compared to the thing I am now. You may think it curious that I can remember godship so well — that such great memories can find place in so shrunken a body as mine. But it is a fact that one remembers more when one has utterly lost rapture than when a measure of thin rapture still survives. Only very old men remember the perfection of being young.

"Well . . . we began making man. That was the most fatal step in our slow suicide — we made man. We were all in the same case, of course. Not one of us retained any integrity of immortality. Scattered among the stars there may still have been real gods, sun makers, immovably almighty. But we — we had nothing to do with stars now; we must even borrow the light of other gods' stars and suns and moons to help our weak eyes to penetrate the small soft particular mysteries of our new creations.

"Directly man was created, two things happened. The first thing was

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



*"I was a mountain maker"*



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that we gods fled one from another, like sinners discovered in a conspiracy. We hid one from another, wishing to work secretly and confound one another with our separate cleverness. And the second thing was that we all lost forever our standard of divinity, our recognition of perfection. Man — our thing — became our standard. And I lost perfection most utterly — look at me now — look at me now. . . . How terrible to think that even from the beginning I — a god — had this canker of death within me, this germ of devastating imperfection lying in wait for my divinity. Eternity, the gift of the gods, was to be for me a diminishing and a humiliation. From the beginning I had been cursed — all unaware — with potential wretchedness, potential humanity, although I was a god and made mountains. . . . Oh, what a pity . . . what a pity. . . ."

He sniffed a little and his bent fragile shoulders shook. But after a moment he composed himself and said with tremulous pride, "Well, I'm sure I ought to be thankful for small mercies. I ought to remember how men glory in manhood — men who have never been gods. And I enjoy men's pleasures. I am a golfer. I have an excellent wife not much over forty. And I *do* like my cup of tea of an evening. . . .

"When we fled one from another, as I told you, I fled West. The light, I thought, was better for working in the West. The gods I left behind were older than I and did not seem to mind working in the dark. There was always a sort of dignity about them even in decay. Indeed, they seemed to me too delicately concerned with maintaining all the darkness and magnificence that they could save from the wreck of divinity. In creating man, these old gods created only old men. But perhaps I am not just; I never knew much about those conservative gods. They basked in the flattery of forgotten rites. For all I know, their brazen sun may still serve their will. Perhaps they still know how to enchant man with madness. But I can only tell you about my rival and me — two gods who aspired to the conquest of youth. We devoted ourselves to youth — and complexity destroyed us at last. All our creations had the flare and urgency of youth. I dare say you, being young, will think it strange that our pursuit of youth should have spelled decay for us. But we were creating humiliation for ourselves, you see, in creating youth. Men ceased to be grateful to us for the gift of life . . . ceased to cry upon us for the right to die at our feet. The smoke of incense in the East and in the West wavered . . . our feasts grew spare . . . and each of us rejoiced to see the dwindling intoxication of the other. For we were quite fallible by then . . . jealous and anxious. . . . The appreciation of masses actually mattered to us . . . we used to compare prayers . . . and martyrdoms. . . .

"But we had one passion in common — in common, I say, though of course it made for the bitterest rivalry of all. We shared the pangs of failing godship — and so each of us secretly hoped to redeem himself by creating a new thing — god and man in one. Each desired to beget this new and saving heir . . . this posterity . . . this one who should be god enough to reawaken reverence in man, and man enough to comfort us fallen gods with a sense of democratic continuity.

"You would not know my name as a god, even if I were to tell it to you. I was the unknown god, the god undiscovered by those who give names to gods. But you would know my rival's name.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Perhaps you know the end of my story too. Men know more than gods in these days. In my own dazed mind the story is much confused. I seem to remember lighting the first fire for a cliff dweller . . . and planning golf links . . . and trying to understand Christian Science . . . but I cannot recall which preceded which. I remember building cities constantly . . . piling up city after city . . . erasing them with desert sand and building them again. Nothing seemed worthy of this astounding new creation — man. I remember perfecting the soul and body of man, little by little, teaching first strength and then guile and then ingenuity to man's crude hands. Of course all those experiments seem to me now as clumsy as my first lizard — I told you, didn't I, how proud I was of my first lizard? — as clumsy, as monstrous, as impossible — but oh, how much more beautiful and innocent! That was still good work . . . but dangerous. The paralysis of complexity was upon my hands — as it was upon my rival's. And as the men we made grew tamer and tamer, they became more and more cruel to us. It became most necessary for us to redeem ourselves in some way. Each of us was set upon the creation of a redeemer. But we had forgotten how to create simply. As for me, I believed that saving perfection might be begotten of a theory and born of cleverness. Under my borrowed stars, I thought, the Man of God might be born. And so, seeking absurdly to produce that perfect flower from the old root of exhausted godship, I inevitably poisoned the soil for such a flower. My dreams seem like ravings now. It was my dream to create for my redeeming heir a world of instant achievement . . . a world of speakable easy truths that should not weary young men or old gods . . . a world in which the fool should not be ashamed to claim equality with the wise . . . a world of big ingenious wheels and little ingenious taboos . . . a world that should pat me democratically on the back and be patted by me. . . . For I was quite a withered small god by then — men could easily look into my face. We were really good pals, men and I. It was a prophetic vision of the Y. M. C. A.

"I had great faith in my dream. I felt very hopeful and superior as I watched my rival, that despot god, driving his reluctant Jews across deserts and seas, ignoring, as it seemed to me, the essential principles of democracy. It seemed so obvious that only by flattering man should gods be flattered now. Omniscience was nothing less than an insult to man. Half wisdom, spread thinly over a continent, was better than wisdom founded on a rock. Victory should be, I was convinced, the heritage of the West — or if not victory, something just as good. Truth was a pale flower — while substitutes made such a beautiful effect — much more beautiful than the real thing. All the substitute arts flourished in the air of my dream, and, on my paper altars, the devotees of substitute ecstasies burned synthetic incense that was far cheaper than the old incense and smelled almost the same. Among so many short cuts to rapture, it seemed obvious that a quick path to salvation would be found. Such an atmosphere of efficient achievement must be most favorable to the conception and easy birth of that heir . . . that young hunter of the West, to whom redemption would fall instant prey.

"The dream of my world and the awakening are so confused in my mind now, I can hardly disentangle them. I became dwarfed and bewildered by too much dreaming. Under my star

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that shone so exactly like a real one — (for I had given up borrowing real stars now, the artificial ones were so much more convenient) — under my hollow gold star I waited for the Child to be born. . . .

"And the end of the hope, the end of the waiting, must have found me sleeping. For I remember only a voice calling me from the exhausted ashen dreams of old age. . . telling me that the Child was born."

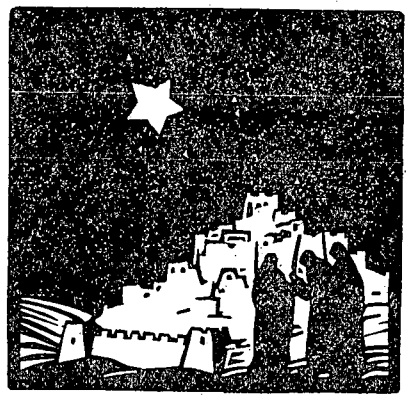
"The Child! In what land?"

"In Bethlehem."

"I knew it. I knew it. In Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Born under my star."

"In Bethlehem of Judæa. Under an Eastern star. . . ."

And I awoke, weeping terribly. And lo . . . a star which I saw in the East went before me, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. . . .



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# SANTA CLAUS: A PSYCHOGRAPH

## By Gamaliel Bradford

THE first thing a psychographer must do is to look for material, facts on which to base his deductions and guesses as to the development and workings of a character. Now in the case of Santa Claus the facts are deplorably scanty. Fortunately what charms us most in saints is what we do not know about them.

The real, original Saint Nicholas celebrates his festa on the sixth of December, and in some countries that date is still the one appropriated to his observances, though they have more generally been transferred to December twenty fifth. It appears that there was a Bishop of Myra, which in itself has a delightfully mythical sound, named Nicholas, who worked his way into the calendar by various marvels, the general characteristic of which was an attractive aptitude for giving. This same Saint Nicholas established himself as the patron of more or less generous and lavish persons, sailors, schoolboys, and even thieves. It will be remembered that in "Ivanhoe" Gurth is eased of his financial burden by a parcel of Saint Nicholas's clerks. All these somewhat thoughtless worshipers seem to proceed on the principle that it is more blessed to give than to receive, at least that the source of supply is of comparatively little consequence, and even should not be too closely subjected to scrutiny, so long as it corresponds sufficiently to the large necessities of outlay. In the Saint Nicholas legend, as in so many stories of the early saints, we find traces of something elemental, of a profound naturalism, closely connected with the pagan sources which got themselves intimately intertwined in the origins of Christian thought and worship.

But a much more charming and more concrete source of information about the most popular of saints than all the old documents is the poem by Clement Moore, which may safely be said to be as well known as Gray's "Elegy", though the American poem has somewhat less pretension to literary finish and elegance. We get from it at least a vividly satisfactory presentation of the Saint, as he has appeared on millions of Christmas cards and will appear on millions more:

He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.
His eyes how they twinkled! His dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry;
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was whiter than snow.
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath.
He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook, when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.
He was chubby and plump — a right jolly old elf;
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself.

At first sight it may seem inappropriate that the saint of jollity, of wild



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

revels and Christmas gambols, should be so old. One thinks of other types that might perhaps have been more suitable, more fit and ready to take a boisterous or a sympathetic part in rounds of physical and spiritual gaiety. Should we not have had a god of Christmas like the young Apollo, a creature of rounded and flawless beauty and tireless vigor, who would have been able not only to dispense joy and merriment, but to partake of them without limit? Or one thinks again of some light, diaphanous fairy, who would hover over the Christmas festivity, showering light and grace and loving kindness with dim, incalculable charm. Or might not the presiding spirit of Christmas perhaps have been a child, since he deals so much with children, a cherub, or a cupid, clapping his hands himself in dancing glee and forgetful ecstasy over the broad munificence which he scatters about the world?

But the more one thinks of it, the more one concludes that the immortal age of Santa is symbolically best. The essence of the type that he embodies is the pure delight of giving, the absolute disregard of self and selfish enjoyment in the exhaustless pleasure of seeing and making others happy. And surely age is the time of life which best knows and develops this delight. There is, to be sure, a hard and meagre age, which stints itself and others, which is so impressed by the fear of dependence and misery that it has nothing to spare for giving and no pleasure in it. But there is also, let us hope much more often, an ample and sunny and generous age which, having reached the limit of personal enjoyment, is ready and anxious to impart to others what it can no longer taste itself. Young vigorous gods and diaphanous fairies are all very well; but they are apt to be youthfully busy about their own concerns. Children are delightful in their expansive generosity when the whim seizes them; but they are without the broad experience which disposes to the sympathetic touch. Sweet and sunny age has no concerns of its own, or none that are pressing enough to bother about, and it has the full knowledge of all the charm of life that can be given to others and of all of others' misery that may be so easily relieved.

Moreover, age is tolerant as youth is not. Age is not exacting in its requirements, does not too nicely discriminate in the objects of its bounty, does not demand a pure perfection in the recipient as an indispensable preliminary to gifts and kindly help. Age, if it is wise and venerable, has learned the beautiful precept of the old physician of King Louis XIV, *Il faut beaucoup pardonner à la nature*, and expresses itself in the lovely words of the old lady in the French comedy: *Je suis trop vieille pour ne pas pardonner*. And age, after all, is the period that best understands and most loves children. It has the patience to study them and the leisure to enjoy them. Perhaps second childhood, with all its drawbacks, has at least this golden privilege.

Then, too, it must be remembered that the age of Santa Claus is not a withered, haggard, misshapen age. It is hearty, robust, vigorous, and well nourished. It has the aspect and the essence of immortal youth. Those rosy cheeks and that dancing belly are not the equipment of an ascetic who grudges to others the gaiety of life because he has long since lost his share in it. The saint has made merry through his thousand years and he proposes to keep it up with all the wisdom and all the variety of long experience. Let silly youth and callow infancy think to outdo him: they will find themselves mistaken. And he rushes his gay and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

riotous movement through the wide, sparkling progress of the winter night, without cessation and without fatigue. And then it occurs to me to wonder what Santa Claus does in summer. Does he spend month after month piling up the wonderful stores of varied richness which he is to dispense in one tremendous nocturnal outburst of worldwide beneficence? Or does he assume some other shape and brighten and gladden summer days and hours by a continued splendor of giving which we know nothing about? Or does he sleep, sleep, and renew his exhausted forces for the resumption of his eternal winter task? Since we cannot say he hibernates, shall we say he æstivates, through the long hot months when his services are not required? Also, there is the further doubt: how does Santa appear in the southern hemisphere, when Christmas flares up with all the blazing intensity of ending June? What becomes then of the reindeer and the fur coat and the glittering icicles hanging from the snowy beard? But one must not vex the reverend sanctity of these ancient legends with impertinent question.

One thing is certain, that being a saint and so in a sense divine, Santa Claus does not know the drawbacks that affect and impair the perfection of mere earthly Christmas giving. First of all, he does not stay to watch the imperfect working of many of his gifts. All is gay and lovely on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, or ought to be. But afterward, there is apt to be discontent and complaints: Why did I get this, and not that? Why did Mary have the lovely doll, while only this stupid picture book has come to me? These things the Saint is not aware of, sweeping in his joyous progress round the world. Then for the parent of this earth there is the unspeakable fatigue. Oh, yes, it is delightful to make the children happy, if they are; but one goes to bed, if one is lucky enough to get there, with every limb aching, and one's chief consciousness is of relief that Christmas cannot come again till three hundred and sixty four common days have come between. And Santa Claus apparently does not have to bother about expense. He puts his hand into his pocket or his sack, and draws out illimitably. Not for nothing is he the patron of Saint Nicholas's clerks. Easy come, easy go. It is a fine thing to be generous and lavish when you draw upon an inexhaustible store. But when you are worried about where the dollars are to come from to provide all the gifts that the children are expecting, you think with a little envy of a saint who has only to lift his hand, and everything desirable will drop from it with prolific and unfailing splendor.

So the legend of Saint Nicholas is a lovely and a delectable myth, the last living relic of the vanishing world of dreams. The fairies are gone. No little children or innocent maidens watch any longer through the ardent summer nights to catch some echo of the songs and dances of tiny people, footing it daintily over the dewy turf. The witches are gone. Unpleasant old ladies can look about them ill-favoredly and purvey gossip without the danger of being burned at the stake. Nobody pays heed to them and nobody fears what they do. The ghosts are gone. Solitary graveyards are far more comfortable and agreeable sojourning places in the summer evenings than crowded streets where one has to be constantly on the watch against becoming a ghost oneself. Santa Claus alone still lingers with us. For heaven's sake let us keep him as long as we can. There are some excellent people who

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are scrupulous about deceiving their children with such legendary nonsense. They are mistaken. The children learn to see soon enough, too clearly and too well, or to think they do. Ah, leave them at least one thrill of passionate mystery that may linger with them when the years begin to grow too plain and dull and bare. After all, in this universe of ignorance, anything may be true, even our dreams.

And there is a still deeper value in the preservation of the Santa Claus legend, even by those who have no faith in that or any other legend whatever. For such preservation typifies the profound principle that, sacred as both are, the law of love is higher than the law of truth. For this there is a perfectly simple and unassailable reason, that truth at its best is deceiving, but love is never. We toil and tire ourselves and sacrifice our lives for the dim goddess Truth. Then she eludes us, slips away from us, mocks at us. But love grows firmer and surer and more prevailing as the years pass by.

Therefore why should not old and young alike, in the brilliant, deceptive Christmas moonlight, harken for the tinkling bells and the pawing reindeer and echo the merry greeting of the Saint, broadcast to the whole wide world:

"Merry Christmas to all and to all a good-night."

## WALKING SOUNDS

By Ethel Louise Knox

THE noisy crunch of snow beneath my feet on Christmas Eve
Is a contented, comfortable sound,
The voice of a cheerful companion
Who carries his end of the conversation manfully —
Creak, crunch,
Squeak!

The breathless gasp of fallen leaves beneath a gallant oak
Is a galumphin', ghostly, whispered sound,
Voices of old goblins, garrulous,
"Who goes?" they are asking, and gather close about my feet —
Crush, gasp,
Hush!

The muffled pad in dust upon a road that pleads for rain
Is a right pleasant, purring, wistful sound,
The voice of a parson proclaiming
Impartially kindness and pity: dust to dust at last —
Puff, pad,
Enough!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# GOLIATH SLINGS THE PEBBLE BACK

## By Clemence Dane

BETTER late than never! It is pleasant to see justice done, even if it has taken some three thousand years in the doing. A word from the Land of Marvelous Slang has, during the last decade, soaked itself into our unreceptive English minds as an extraordinarily convenient epithet of abuse. We shall never let it go; for the word is "highbrow". I suppose it is because there is such a large streak of the Philistine in most of us that we so enjoy using it. But do we realize that in using it we are not merely abusing those who disagree with us, but righting a wrong, standing up for an abused people, returning the pebble that David slung — some years ago now! For that is what we are doing: we are putting a weapon into the hand of that despised person, the Philistine.

And indeed and indeed, it seems to me time that the Philistine got a little better treatment. You know his blameless history. He was a peaceful, self contained person, living on his own property in the Promised Land, which is called after him — Palestine. He was not proud: he did not pretend to be a creator; though he could and did imitate the arts to which his cousins of Tyre and Sidon introduced him: he would have frankly confessed, I am sure, that "he didn't know anything about art: he only knew what he liked"! By nature and choice he was a merchant, a plain man; though when it came to fighting he could stubbornly hold his own: and if the attackers would not be warned he could assume the offensive, suddenly and terribly. The cry, "The Philistines be upon thee!" must have been known to Samson since his cradle days as the local equivalent for the modern nursemaid's, "There's a policeman coming!" Yet what is more respectable than a policeman, and what could have been more respectable than a Philistine even if, badgered by incessant attacks on all he held dear, he did occasionally retort upon his attackers, make prisoners, and bring home loot — "vessels of silver and vessels of gold" as presents for his wife and offering to his gods.

For the Philistine had his gods, and though his statues of them are comical and uncouth, and bought probably at second hand even then, his gods were beautiful gods — Tanith, the holy face: Dagon, the lord of fishes, giver of food to seafaring men: Ashtoreth, our lady of the doves: and Melkarth, the "strong, silent man"-god who has survived and is worshiped today in the novels of — let us not mention names! What could be more harmless than this good, decent Philistine, doing his duty in that state of life to which it had pleased his gods to call him, and as far as the rest of the world was concerned only asking to be let alone? But was he let alone? No, indeed! There arrived one day a pack of gypsies out of Egypt — Egypt the land of mysteries not to be meddled with, the land of spells and sorceries, of dead men undying, and statues that sang at sunrise, Egypt the land of lions with women's faces and women's breasts, who asked riddles the Philistine



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

couldn't answer and didn't want to try to answer, the land, in other words, of art! These gypsies, who annoyed the Philistine by calling themselves the chosen people, settled down uninvited next door to him, criticized everything that he did, sneered at everything that he felt, regulated his morality, derided his gods, upset his views on sanitation and cookery, and imposed on him unheard of ideals. Yet when, after much battling, he agreed, for peace and quiet's sake, to bow to their superiority and serve their god, they turned on him with high and haughtier brows than ever. "You? How can you expect to be one of us? You're a Philistine!"

That is how the chosen people treated the harmless necessary Philistine three thousand years ago: that is how they have gone on treating him ever since. Yet he only wants to be let alone, left to learn to understand their god by slow degrees. But they won't let him alone. They are perpetually chivying him. They sneer at him, his slow wits, his primitive opinions, his hidebound conventions, his shopkeeper's soul. They have made his beautiful name, Philistine, into an epithet of contempt. Even that he could bear if they would only let him be. But they won't. They spoil his pleasure whenever they can, and expect him to be grateful.

He adored Shakespeare until they assured him that only a fool would waste his time on "Antony and Cleopatra" when the new poet, Mr. Dryden, had lifted the whole story onto a higher plane in "All for Love". He timidly ventured one day that he thought "Lycidas" very pretty. Down upon him comes the great Cham of literature with:

"The diction is harsh: the rhymes uncertain: the numbers unpleasing. Its form is easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting. . . . In this poem . . . there is no art, for there is nothing new"; and adds: "Surely no man could have fancied that he read 'Lycidas' with pleasure unless he had known the author!"

Meekly the Philistine supposed that a clever fellow like Johnson ought to know. Forbidden to enjoy Milton, he picks up for a few pence some queer poems by a fellow citizen — one John Keats. He likes them: "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever!" Yes, he can understand that. He doesn't know anything about art but he, too, goes on liking what he likes! If this John Keats is a poet — well then, he *likes* poetry, does the Philistine! But instantly the critics assured him that only a Philistine could ever see anything in the cockney rhymes of an underbred young chemist, and the critics' business is to know all about art! So — Farewell Keats! The Philistine must feed as best he can on Hayley and Rogers and the Sunday sermon, until a line of verse catches his dull ear once more, some such line as:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting —

The Philistine doesn't know anything about poetry, but he likes that! But Authority, no less Authority than the great Lord Byron, whom the simple Philistine reverenced as a poet and a critic and a man of the world, warned him at once that on no account must he "to vulgar Wordsworth stoop"! So the Philistine, browbeaten again, sets his little girl to learn, instead of the forbidden lines about the Celandine or the Daffodils, another snatch that has caught his unlettered fancy, something about a tiger —

. . . burning bright
In the forests of the night.

He doesn't know why he teaches her that except that — he likes it! But all the critics have told him that he must

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be mad to like it, as mad as the madman who wrote it!

So it goes on. He wolfs down Tennyson: and the highbrows lift their eyebrows, murmuring, "Really, Tennyson, you know! I suppose he's never heard of Kipling!" He absorbs Kipling with an ardor that would make them wash their hands of him altogether if it weren't so convenient to have a whipping boy. Instead they read him the very latest new poet's poem about the clockwork nightingale that the Emperor of Japan sent to the Emperor of China. He murmurs timidly that of course he doesn't know anything about art, but somehow it doesn't seem to him quite as nice as that pretty thing he read once by that Victorian fellow about a real one:

> Freshen thy flowers as in former years
> With dew, and listen with enchanted ears
> In the dark dingles, to the nightingale.

He can't help thinking that rather good, because when he was a boy the nightingales used to sing at the bottom of the garden, and they made a noise just like that.

"Oh well, of course," cry the highbrows, outraged, "if you like photography — !" He does. He's a Philistine!

At present they, the critics, the poetry tasters, the setters up of signposts, the openers of roads, are busy pouring down his throat imagist poems, and Skeltonics, and vers libre. And when he protests, spluttering, that the new wine is too heady for him, that he likes best the old wine that he has stored away in his modest Victorian cellar, they shrug their shoulders and say: "What can you expect from a Philistine?" Do you wonder if he belatedly flings his only retort, his precious pebble "Highbrow!" after them, and rejoices when it hits?

But indeed he is a vulgar person. Yet sometimes I wonder if his method of going by what he likes, whatever the critics say, wouldn't help ordinary poetry lovers, people who, whether they try to read verse or try to write verse, have never succeeded in knowing the difference between an anapest and an Anabaptist. I know at least that it has helped me. Once upon a time I found de la Mare's "Peacock Pie" on a bookstall and bought it because I liked the title. Nobody ever told me it was the proper thing to like: it was just a fad of my own: and I chanted, "Has anybody seen my Mopser?" in my bath every morning for weeks afterward because it seemed the right sort of thing for a morning bath, not because Mr. de la Mare was a recognized poet. But then you see I read for "liking": I don't believe that poetry can be assessed in the schools and the critical columns: I don't believe that poetry is a question of brains and head. I believe that poetry is a question of ear and heart: and I believe that those poets will live longest who write from the heart, for the heart. In the ever renewed race between the highbrow hare and the Philistine tortoise, the tortoise has often been found and will, I prophesy, often be found, quenching his thirst at the goal which is the well of poetry, when the hare has overshot his mark altogether and is bounding off into the desert.

Nobody denies the Philistine's faults, his conservativeness, his unhurryableness, his obstinacy, his dangerous habit of confusing sentiment with sentimentality. Yet the world audience to whom the poet sings is still composed of a hundred Philistines to one highbrow. Perhaps that is why poetry lives. For poetry, like kissing, goes by liking.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# MY FAVORITE CHARACTER IN FICTION

## By Charles G. Norris

*Sketched by George A. Picken*

IT'S ridiculous to try to pick out one favorite character in all the books you've read. When you're ten years old you have one favorite person about whom you like to read; at twenty another; at thirty another; and so on, changing with the years. Certainly "Dan, Dan the Firebrand" in "Little Men" was once my ideal of a fictitious hero, and there was a time when I wept over "Eric" and read the book nine times. Just at the moment I think Maggie Campion in "The Perennial Bachelor" about the most lovable, interesting, and alive person I've encountered in many a year. And between those early years and the present, there is a whole army of heroes and heroines, in the front ranks of which I see struggling forward Jude Fawley, Madame Bovary, Annixter, the marvelous person who was the chief protagonist in Maxwell's "In Cotton Wool", Mulvaney, Van Bibber, Rudolf Rassendyll, Nana, Anna Karénina, Evelyn Innes, and assuredly that foul devil Beteau in "La Terre". And this raises the point: Is one's favorite character in fiction the one you admire most as a likable, stimulating, creditable person, or is it the character that you deem the best drawn, the most convincing, the most brilliantly conceived? Rather the latter, I think — at least it is so with me when I come to consider all the acquaintances that I've made in fiction and like to bring to mind. And so if I must answer the question with but one name and pick out the character who for twenty years — as much today as when I first read of him and came to know him — has stirred me, and wrung my heart with sympathy and pity, I must submit Hurstwood in Dreiser's "Sister Carrie". Hurstwood, because there is no truer portrait — man or woman — in any book I've ever read; Hurstwood, because I cannot recall anyone in any previous, contemporaneous, or subsequent book who is remotely like him; Hurstwood, because although his type stands alone in fiction, you and I know hundreds of men whose histories closely parallel his, and hundreds more who in his situation and similarly tempted would do exactly as he did; Hurstwood, because his moral degradation, his slow crumbling, and the disintegration of his soul, spirit, and body as the direct result of his crime is masterly conceived, masterly presented, and masterly worked out.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

G. W. Hurstwood



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# MY FAVORITE CHARACTER IN FICTION

## By E. Barrington

*Sketched by George A. Picken*

ONE'S favorite character in fiction? Lord save us — what a question! Is it to live with, or as art's masterpiece? I take it at the former. Then I should choose to live with Thackeray's Harry Esmond of all the men I have met with in printed page. For why? Because (with the exception of Don Quixote, who was a little mad and therefore out of the running) Esmond is the greatest gentleman of them all. Truest friend and noblest foe, "of a very pleasant sarcastical turn", humorous, wise, keen, well able to hold his own with such giants as the awful Dr. Swift and the elegant Mr. Addison, and to view their weaknesses with his own fine imperceptible smile, yet the kindest, the most loyal heart in all the world of fiction — that is the man for me! A great aristocrat but, as the true aristocrat must always be, a democrat in the things that really matter one pinch of snuff. Who but Esmond would have destroyed the evidence of his own marquisate and have borne the stigma of illegitimacy all his days for friendship's sake, and that ill requited? I know none other of whom that story is credible, but it is perfectly clear that, being Esmond, he knew how to value things as they are, not as they seem. A loyal lover, yet not beauty's slave. When the lovely Beatrix sells soul as well as body for the false pipings of the young Pretender and Esmond knows the truth past doubting, then — then, his love for her falls down dead. He will serve her, love her, after another fashion — but as his soul's mistress, no. That is impossible, even as a matter of taste. A flawed diamond, unfit for a gentleman's wearing. Yet no prig — heaven forbid! He sees her hereafter with the clear tranquillity with which he beholds the rest of the world. Indeed, I think he saw her always as she was in truth. Witness the charming paper he wrote concerning her for "The Tatler", even before the rays of her beauty had ceased to dazzle him. Thackeray wrote a greater book than "Esmond". Other men have written greater books than any of his. But when I think of the most accomplished gentlemen in fiction I think of Harry Esmond. One is safer with them than with others, and they satisfy one's taste. Therefore, since I prefer a great gentleman to any other creation of nature or art, with Esmond I would live and die.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Harry Esmond



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# EVENING

## By Zona Gale

ERNIE MENDENHALL was now forty two years old, and still he had found no one with whom to share his home. His home was a white house in the town of Oderhill, and its little garden had fine hollyhocks. For four years, since the death of his parents, he had lived there alone, and in those four years he had bought now and then a piece of old furniture or a rug or some small article for his house. Every time that he did this, the neighbors would say: "Ernie Mendenhall must be going to get married." But so far he had not married. He earned his living as part time secretary for a Writer who lived on the edge of town. Every morning the neighbors saw Ernie's long form, swinging its right arm and holding its left arm stiff as it hurried along, his lips moving in imagined talk. And they said: "What can he be talking about, to himself that way? He hasn't any business of his own to reckon up."

One summer weekend the Writer had a house party and Alla Vintrin was his guest. On Sunday morning she walked into the library where Ernie was working. He saw her frail beauty in its pink linen enclosure, her delicate profile, her heavy hair. The linen, the profile, and the heavy hair attacked him as an epidemic attacks, and he was as one who catches a cold instantly and pervadingly.

She said: "Is the old secretary in this room — the Governor Winthrop secretary? . . ."

"Here", said Ernie with immense difficulty, and bowed, and perceived that he had bowed not to her but to the secretary.

He managed to talk to her about that piece of old mahogany. Afterward he wondered whether he had not perhaps said: "It has a beautiful profile, heavy hair, and it wears pink." And though later he tried in agony to recall her words, he could recover nothing save an assent, a murmur, a perfume.

Next he noted, from a great distance, that he was saying to her, if she was interested in old furniture, he had some good pieces in his house, if she cared . . . And she said alertly that she did care, and could she see them that morning? With no more thought of the Writer than of an eagle on a far cliff, Ernie walked out of the house and down the streets of Oderhill, and beside him she went.

She said little — he liked her for that. She walked rapidly — that he liked. She was not so tall as he, she observed the flowers, she stopped and spoke to a child — she was perfect.

Thanking God for an upbringing which had forced him to keep order in his house, he opened his front door and let her in upon the hooked rugs, the cherry chairs, and the one piece of rosewood. It was before this melodeon of rosewood that Alla Vintrin paused at last, then sat, pulled out the stops, and pressed from the reluctant instrument its few remaining tones.

And at the round of music, played by her, in his home, Ernie's years of wait-



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing cried from his throat these words: "Could you stay? Could you live here? Could you be my wife?" And this he did not hear himself saying from a distance. No, for he was in the very words themselves.

She looked round the room, small, sweet and colored, and at the hollyhocks motionless beyond the glass. "Why not?" she said.

"You could? You would?" He was not sure that he said this at all. And all that he heard her say was "Why not?" as she moved to the door. He walked beside her under the maples, and told her about his life. Always he had wanted to tell somebody about his life, but when he had tried, his confidante had looked at him. Eyes could be puzzled, amused, disdainful. Alla did not look at him. She merely walked beside him and listened. "Could you? Would you?" Ernie cried when he had done.

"Why not?" she said again, with immense sadness.

In the corridor at the Writer's house she gave him her hand, saying only: "I shall see you again, Mr. Mendenhall — this afternoon, perhaps."

But that Sunday afternoon all the house party decided to motor back to town. Ernie, who had made his task last into the day, heard them go, saw them go, and sat at his desk mute and blind.

Three days later he had a note from Alla:

. . . and I know exactly how you are feeling because you spoke so. I have asked one or two men to marry me and wished afterward that I hadn't spoken. But you mustn't mind. Those forty two years in Oderhill — you are likely to ask anybody, anywhere. . . . I did mean to speak to you about the melodeon. I assume that those things are for sale, and if the melodeon is at all within my reach I should like very much to buy it. . . .

Every day the neighbors saw Ernie's long form as it hurried along, his lips moving in imagined talk with someone.

He was writing to Alla Vintrin, composing his letters as he walked the streets. He was telling her of his life, its routine, its emptiness. These letters he dared to write out. When her bread and butter letter came to the Writer, Ernie copied the address, and it burned on his bureau. One night, when it rained, he took out his letters to her, read them over, selected the mildest, addressed it, carried it in his pocket for days. One day when he had an influenza, he took the letter from his pocket and mailed it.

As soon as the letter was mailed, he fashioned her reply, many replies. She would be kind, she would be cold, she would be cruel. All these replies he wrote in his mind. When days passed and no reply came, he said to himself that she had gone abroad. And when his letter reached her, at some lonely foreign place, how touched and warmed she would be that he had remembered. He thought that she would write: "My dear friend, you move me greatly." Once he had taken down that sentence, dictated by the Writer: "My dear friend, you move me greatly." No answer came, but when he was at home for a week with lumbago, he chose another of his letters to her and mailed that. It required a calling down by the Writer and his own omission from an Oderhill wedding reception to bring the third and fourth letters to the mail box. In all Ernie sent off six letters. But the mails, he knew, were uncertain. So he continued to fashion her replies. At last he wrote down these replies, and he would read them, at home, in the evenings: "My dear friend, you move me greatly." His lips whispered as he read. He remembered the phrases in her letters and in his own, and he

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would go down the street, swinging his right arm and holding his left arm stiff as he hurried along. And the neighbors said, "What can he be talking about to himself that way?"

One night, sitting alone by his stove, going over one of her replies, it occurred to Ernie Mendenhall that he was tired of those things that he was saying, as having come from her. What else would she say? He could think of nothing else. Certainly these were rather tiresome — talk about his safety, his loneliness, her coming to Oderhill. Even "My dear friend, you move me greatly" had become tiresome by repetition. Somewhat irritably he saluted the image of her, writing to him, saying to him the same thing over and over. Couldn't she think of anything else to say?

He began to be bored with her. Feeling the wind blowing in the back of his neck, he asked her quite irritably what had made her leave the window open at the top. Finding the fire low he said to her, in his mind, that she could certainly put in a stick of wood when it was he who filled the woodbox. And when the clock struck a wrong hour he exclaimed aloud to her that with all that he had to do, earning their living, he should have thought that she might wind the clock. The next morning when he watered a favorite plant he saw that water had dripped down on the rosewood melodeon, and he cried reproachfully: "You who pretended to care for this rosewood melodeon, what have you ever done to protect it?" But at that she answered up quite tartly, and he was startled and hastened out of the house.

He found that his homecomings had acquired a new fascination. He would come hurrying into the house and cry: "What? No fire? No supper? A great way to treat a man who's been slaving all day for you." "Slaving indeed!" would come her clear reply. "Writing a few letters for a pittance. I've a good mind to sell your old rosewood melodeon and make real money for us." At that he would fly into a rage, and then grow sullen, and would eat no dinner — actually did eat none; and imagined Alla Vintrin Mendenhall cooking a steak savory with onions and eating it all alone. Occasionally he would smile at himself awkwardly; but less and less often.

Then a child was born to the Writer, and Ernie Mendenhall was extremely shaken. Arriving one morning for work, he heard that faint wailing above-stairs. All day when the cry came he could do nothing but listen. And when he went home at night, there was Alla Vintrin Mendenhall with a child.

But now his imagination failed. He had no idea what he would say to her. He could not even look at her. Suddenly she was not there any more, but was wrapt away from him, absorbed in a wailing cry. Sometimes he could catch an outline of her bending head, but when she turned toward him, her face blindingly disappeared and the game stopped. He sat by the stove and imagined her in the room above-stairs. He never went there. It was many nights before she was downstairs with him again. He sat making milk toast when she entered. He looked at her in awe and in silence, but then his milk boiled over onto the griddle and he said: "Is it or isn't it a woman's job to keep things from boiling over, say?" And when he blackened the toast he became fairly caustic. After that they resumed their old quarrels. When she was unconscionably exasperating, Ernie Mendenhall would hurry along the streets, his lips moving as he rehearsed what he would tell her. And the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

neighbors would say: "Ernie Mendenhall — don't you s'pose he works out puzzles as he walks?"

As the holidays came near, he wandered about in the shops of the little town, thinking of a gift for her and one for the child. But when he touched this or that, it seemed not worthy of them. He bought one little gift, a vase to stand on her melodeon — he thought of it as her melodeon — and on Christmas eve he filled the vase with roses and watched her bend above it, with the child. He thought: "Maybe they meant something like this about Christmas. Maybe it has something to do with somebody being born not of the flesh —" But this he dismissed as unlikely. He prolonged the evening, became involved in dressing an imaginary tree, very tall, and ended in disagreeing with her about having so much tinsel stuff all over everything; found the fire out, and went to bed annoyed by her obstinacy and her carelessness. But he woke once and smelled the roses.

In the holiday week, he came dragging home from his work one dim afternoon, and as he approached his house with its white-folded spruces, he felt a sense of utter weariness at the look of it. At once he knew this as the weariness of the end of a game. He understood that the game had played itself out. All was over, it seemed, the funeral, all; and he entered upon his house as it had been before ever he had seen her. He moved through the little empty rooms, looking at them so differently. Desolation flowed through him. He could experience, but he could not believe that she was gone.

In his mail box a letter waited. Before he opened it he knew her touch. Alla Vintrin wrote: "Dear Sir: Is the rosewood melodeon still for sale? I was married in the spring, and now that we are furnishing our house —" He replied: "Dear Madam: The rosewood melodeon is not for sale. I wish to keep it on account of its associations . . ." He went into the white evening and posted the letter at the box where he had posted all the others, which she must have received; and he turned back toward the house where she had died.

He had fallen in love, experienced domesticity, been bored by it, and was left alone in Christmas week with the child whom none had ever begotten. He recounted these things to himself as he walked. And the neighbors, meeting him, said: "Ernie Mendenhall, he's always talking away about something."

## GOD'S MEDALS

By Hudson Strode

GOD did not even get a ribbon at the Universal Fair
for His model of substantial Man
which earth folk thought His masterpiece;
Yet with such flitting things as butterflies and sunsets
He won so many medals
that He got the name of master just the same.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# IN A TUNISIAN OASIS

## By Aldous Huxley

WAKING at dawn, I looked out of the window. We were in the desert. On either side of the railway an immense plain, flat as Holland, but tawny instead of green, stretched out interminably. On the horizon, instead of windmills, a row of camels was silhouetted against the grey sky. Mile after mile, the train rolled slowly southward.

At Tozeur, when at last we arrived, it had just finished raining — for the first time in two and a half years — and now the wind had sprung up; there was a sandstorm. A thick brown fog, whirled into eddies by the wind, gritty to the skin, abolished the landscape from before our smarting eyes. We sneezed; there was sand in our ears, in our hair, between our teeth. It was horrible. I felt depressed, but not surprised. The weather is always horrible when I travel.

Once in a French hotel, I was accused of having brought with me the flat black bugs of whose presence among my bedclothes I complained to a self righteous proprietress. I defended myself with energy against the impeachment. Bugs — no; I am innocent of bugs. But when it comes to bad weather, I have to plead guilty. Rain, frost, wind, snow, hail, fog — I bring them with me wherever I go. I bring them to places where they have never been heard of, at seasons when it is impossible that they should occur. What delightful skating there will be in the Spice Islands when I arrive! On this particular journey I had brought with me to every place on my itinerary the most appalling meteorological calamities. At Naples, for example, it was the snow. Coming out of the theatre on the night of our arrival, we found it lying an inch deep under the palm trees in the public gardens. And Vesuvius, next morning, glittered white, like Fujiyama, against the pale spring sky. At Palermo there was a cloudburst. "Between the Syrtes and soft Sicily" we passed through a tempest of hail, lightning and wind. At Tunis it very nearly froze. At Sousse the wind was so violent that the stiff board-like leaves of the cactuses swayed and trembled in the air like aspens. And now, on the day of our arrival at Tozeur, it had rained for the first time in thirty months, and there was a sandstorm. No, I was not in the least surprised; but I could not help feeling a little gloomy.

Toward evening the wind somewhat abated; the sand began to drop out of the air. At midday the brown curtain had been impenetrable at fifty yards. It thinned, grew gauzier; one could see objects at a hundred, two hundred yards. From the windows of the hotel bedroom in which we had sat all day, trying — but in vain, for it came through even invisible crannies — to escape from the wind blown sand, we could see the fringes of a dense forest of palm trees, the dome of a little mosque, houses of sun dried brick, and thin brown men in flapping nightshirts walking, with muffled faces and bent heads, against the wind, or riding,



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sometimes astride, sometimes sideways, on the bony rumps of patient little asses. Two very professional tourists in sun helmets — there was no sun — emerged round the corner of a street. A malicious gust of wind caught them unawares; simultaneously the two helmets shot into the air, thudded, rolled in the dust. The two professional tourists scuttled in pursuit. The spectacle cheered us a little; we descended, we ventured out of doors.

A melancholy Arab offered to show us round the town. Knowing how hard it is to find one's way in these smelly labyrinths, we accepted his offer. His knowledge of French was limited; so too, in consequence, was the information he gave us. He employed what I may call the Berlitz method. Thus, when a column of whirling sand rose up and jumped at us round the corner of a street, our guide turned to us and said, pointing: "*Poussière.*" We might have guessed it ourselves.

He led us interminably through narrow, many cornered streets, between eyeless walls, half crumbled and tottering.

"*Village*", he explained. "*Très plaisant.*" We did not altogether agree with him.

A walk through an Arab village is reminiscent of walks through Ostia or Pompeii. Roman remains are generally in a better state of preservation, and cleaner; that is all. One is astonished to see, among these dusty ruins, white robed families crouching over their repasts.

Our guide patted a brown mud wall.

"*Briques*", he said and repeated the word several times, so that we might be certain what he meant.

These bricks, which are of sun dried mud, are sometimes, on the façades of the more considerable houses, arranged in a series of simple and pleasing patterns — diamonds, quincunxes, hexagons. A local art which nobody now takes the trouble to practise — nobody, that is, except the Europeans, who, with characteristic energy, have used and wildly abused the traditional ornamentation on the walls of the station and the principal hotel. It is a curious and characteristic fact that, whenever in Tunisia one sees a particularly oriental piece of architecture, it is sure to have been built by the French, since 1881. The cathedral of Carthage, the law courts and schools of Tunis — these are more Moorish than the Alhambra, Moorish as only oriental tearooms in Paris or London can be Moorish. In thirty years the French have produced buildings more typically and intensely Arabian than the Arabs themselves contrived to do in the course of thirteen centuries.

We passed into the marketplace.

"*Viande*", said our guide, fingering as he passed a well thumbed collop of mutton, lying among the dust and flies on a little booth.

We nodded.

"*Très joli*", commented our guide. "*Très plaisant.*" Noisily he spat on the ground. The proprietor of the booth spat too. We hurried away; it needs time to grow inured to Arabian habits. These frightful hoickings in the throat, these sibilant explosions and semi-liquid impacts are almost the national music of the Arabs.

There are in the desert of southern Tunisia three great oases: Gabes by the sea, a little north of that island of Djerba which is, traditionally, the classical island of the Lotus Eaters; Tozeur, to the west of it, some seventy miles inland; and Nefta, fifteen miles west of Tozeur, the starting point of the caravans which trade between southern Tunisia and the great oases of the Algerian Sahara, Biskra and Toug-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gourt. These oases are all of much the same size, each consisting of some six or seven thousand acres of cultivated ground, and are all three remarkable for their numerous and copious springs. In the middle of the desert, suddenly, a hundred fountains come welling out of the sand; rivers run, a network of little canals is dug. An innumerable forest of date palms springs up — a forest whose undergrowth is corn and roses, vines and apricot trees, olives and pomegranates, pepper trees, castor oil trees, banana trees, every precious plant of the temperate and the sub-tropical zones. No rain falls on these little Edens — except on the days of my arrival — but the springs, fed from who knows what distant source, flow inexhaustibly and have flowed at least since Roman times. Islanded among the sands, their green luxuriance is a standing miracle. That it should have been in a desert, with here and there such islands of palm trees, that Judaism and Mohammedanism took their rise is a thing which, since I have seen an oasis, astonishes me. The religion which, in such a country, would naturally suggest itself to me, would be no abstract monotheism, but the adoration of life, of the forces of green and growing nature. In an oasis, it seems to me, the worship of Pan and of the Great Mother should be celebrated with an almost desperate earnestness. The nymphs of water and of trees ought surely, here, to receive a passionate gratitude. In the desert, I should infallibly have invented the Greek mythology. The Jews and the Arabs discovered Jahveh and Allah. I find it strange.

Of the three great Tunisian oases, my favorite is Nefta. Gabes runs it close for beauty, while the proximity of the sea gives it a charm which Nefta lacks. But on the other hand, Gabes is less fertile than Nefta and, socially, more sophisticated. There must be the best part of two hundred Europeans living at Gabes. There is dancing once a week at the hotel. Gabes is quite the little Paris. The same objection applies to Tozeur, which has a railway station and positively teems with French officials. Nefta, with fourteen thousand Arabs, has a white population of a dozen or thereabouts. A hundred Frenchmen can always make a Paris; twelve, I am happy to say, cannot. The only non-Arabian feature of Nefta is its hotel, which is clean, comfortable, French, and efficient. At Nefta one may live among barbarians, in the Middle Ages, and at the same time, for thirty francs a day, enjoy the advantages of contemporary western civilization. What could be more delightful?

We set off next morning by car, across the desert. From Tozeur the road mounts slightly to a plateau which dominates the surrounding country. The day was clear and sunny. We looked down on the green island of Tozeur — four hundred thousand palm trees among the sands. Beyond the oasis we could see the chotts, glittering in the sun. The chotts are shallow depressions in the ground, at one time, no doubt, the beds of considerable lakes. There is no water in them now; but the soil is furred with a bright saline efflorescence. At a distance, you could swear you saw the sea. For the rest, the landscape is all sand and lion colored rock.

We bumped on across the desert. Every now and then we passed a camel, a string of camels. Their owners walked or rode on asses beside them. The womenfolk were perched among the baggage on the hump — a testimony, most eloquent in this Mohammedan country, to the great discomfort

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of camel riding. Once we met a small Citroen lorry, crammed to overflowing with white robed Arabs. In the Sahara, the automobile has begun to challenge the supremacy of the camel. Little ten horsepower Citroens dart about the desert. For the rougher mountainous country, special six wheeled cars are needed, and with caterpillar wheels one may even affront the soft and shifting sand of the dunes. Motor buses now ply across the desert. A line, we were told, was shortly to be inaugurated between Nefta and Touggourt, across two hundred kilometres of sand. In a few years, no doubt, we shall all have visited Lake Tchad and Timbuktu. Should one be glad or sorry? I find it difficult to decide.

The hotel at Nefta is a long low building, occupying one whole side of the market square. From your bedroom window you watch the Arabs living; they do it unhurriedly and with a dignified inefficiency. Endlessly haggling, they buy and sell. The vender offers a mutton chop, slightly soiled; the buyer professes himself outraged by a price which would be exorbitant if the goods were spotlessly first hand. It takes them half an hour to come to a compromise. On the ground white bundles doze in the sun; when the sun grows too hot, they roll a few yards and doze again in the shade. The notables of the town, the rich proprietors of palm trees, stroll past with the dignity of Roman senators. Their garments are of the finest wool; they carry walking sticks; they wear European shoes and socks, and on their bare brown calves — a little touch entirely characteristic of the real as opposed to the literary East — pale mauve or shell pink sock suspenders. Wild men ride in from the desert. Some of them, trusting to common sense as well as Allah to preserve them from ophthalmia, wear smoked motor goggles. With much shouting, much reverberant thumping of dusty, moth eaten hides, a string of camels is driven in. They kneel, they are unloaded. Supercilious and haughty, they turn this way and that, like the dowagers of very aristocratic families at a plebeian evening party. Then, all at once, one of them stretches out its long neck limply along the ground and shuts its eyes. The movement is one of hopeless weariness; the grotesque animal is suddenly pathetic. And what groanings, what gurglings in the throat, what enormous sighs when their masters begin to reload them! Every additional package evokes a bubbling protest, and when at last they have to rise from their knees, they moan as though their hearts were broken. Blind beggars sit patiently awaiting the alms they never receive. Their raw eyelids black with flies, small children play contentedly in the dust. If Allah wills it, they too will be blind one day; blessed be the name of Allah.

Sitting at our window, we watch the spectacle. And at night, after a pink and yellow sunset with silhouetted palm trees and domes against the sky (for my taste, I am afraid, altogether too like the colored plates in the illustrated Bible), at night huge stars come out in the indigo sky, the cafés are little caves of yellow light, draped figures move in the narrow streets with lanterns in their hands, and on the flat roofs of the houses one sees the prowling shadows of enormous watch dogs. There is silence, the silence of the desert; from time to time there comes to us, very distinctly, the distant sound of spitting.

Walking among the crowds of the marketplace or along the narrow labyrinthine streets, I was always agreeably surprised by the apathetically courteous

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aloofness of Arab manners. It had been the same in Tunis and the other larger towns. It is only by Jews and Europeanized Arabs that the tourist is pestered; through the native quarters he walks untroubled. There are beggars in plenty, of course, hawkers, guides, cab drivers; and when you pass they faintly stir, it is true, from their impassive calm. They stretch out hands, they offer Arab antiquities of the most genuine German manufacture, they propose to take you the round of the sights, they invite you into their flyblown vehicles. But they do all these things politely and quite uninsistently. A single refusal suffices to check their nascent importunity. You shake your head; they relapse once more into the apathy from which your appearance momentarily roused them — resignedly; nay, almost, you feel, with a sense of relief that it had not, after all, been necessary to disturb themselves. Coming from Naples, we had been particularly struck by this lethargic politeness. For in Naples the beggars claim an alms noisily and as though by right. If you refuse to ride, the cabmen of Pozzuoli follow you up the road, alternately cursing and whining, and at every hundred yards reducing their price by yet another ten per cent. The guides at Pompeii fairly insist on being taken; they cry aloud, they show their certificates, they enumerate their wives and starving children. As for the hawkers, they simply will not let you go. What, you don't want colored photographs of Vesuvius? Then look at these corals. No corals? But here is the last word in cigarette holders. You do not smoke? But in any case you shave; these razor blades, now. . . . You shake your head. Then toothpicks, magnifying glasses, celluloid combs. Stubbornly, you continue to refuse. The hawker plays his last card — an ace, it must be admitted, and of trumps. He comes very close to you, he blows garlic and alcohol confidentially into your face. From an inner pocket, he produces an envelope; he opens it, he presses the contents into your hand. You may not want corals or razor blades, views of Vesuvius or celluloid combs; he admits it. But can you honestly say — honestly, with your hand on your heart — that you have no use for pornographic engravings? And for nothing, sir, positively for nothing. Ten francs apiece; the set of twelve for a hundred. . . .

The touts, the pimps, the mendicants of Italy are the energetic pests of a conquering, progressive race. The Neapolitan cabman is a disciple of Samuel Smiles; the venders of pornographic postcards and the sturdy beggars live their lives with a strenuousness that would have earned the commendation of a Roosevelt. Self help and the strenuous life do not flourish on the other shore of the Mediterranean. In Tunisia, the tourist walks abroad unpestered. The Arabs have no future.

And yet there were periods in the past when the Arabs were a progressing people. During the centuries which immediately followed Mohammed's apostolate, the Arabs had a future — a future and a most formidable present. Too much insistence on the fatalism inherent in their religion has reduced them to the condition of static lethargy and supine incuriousness in which they now find themselves. That they might still have a future if they changed their philosophy of life must be obvious to anyone who has watched the behavior of Arab children, who have not yet had time to be influenced by the prevailing fatalism of Islam. Arab children are as lively, as inquisitive, as tiresome, and as charming as the children of the most progressively western people.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At Nefta the adult beggars and donkey drivers might leave us, resignedly, in peace; but the children were unescapable. We could never stir abroad without finding a little troop of them frisking around us. It was in vain that we tried to drive them away; they accompanied us, whether we liked it or no, on every walk and, when the walk was over, claimed wages for their importunate fidelity.

To provide tourists with guidance they did not need — this, we found, was the staple profession of the little boys of Nefta. But they had other and more ingenious ways of making money. Close and acute observers of tourists, they had made an important psychological discovery about this curious race of beings. Foreigners, they found out, especially elderly female foreigners, have a preposterous tenderness for animals. The little boys of Nefta have systematically exploited this discovery. Their methods, which we had frequent opportunities of observing, are simple and effective. In front of the hotel a gang of little ruffians is perpetually on the watch. A tourist shows himself, or herself, on one of the balconies: immediately, the general of the troop — or perhaps it would be better to call him the director of the company, for it is obvious that the whole affair is organized on a strictly business footing — runs forward to within easy coin tossing distance. From somewhere about his person he produces a captive bird — generally some brightly colored little creature not unlike a goldfinch. Smiling up at the tourist, he shows his prize. "*Oiseau*", he explains in his pidgin French. When the tourist has been made to understand that the bird is alive, the little boy proceeds, with the elaborate gestures of a conjurer, to pretend to wring its neck, to pull off its legs and wings, to pluck out its feathers. For a tenderhearted tourist, the menacing pantomime is unbearable.

"*Lâche la bête. Je te donne dix sous.*"

Released, the bird flaps ineffectually away, as well as its clipped wings will permit. The coins are duly thrown and in the twinkling of an eye picked up. And the little boys scamper off to recapture the feebly fluttering source of their income. After seeing an old English lady blackmailed out of a small fortune for the ten-times-repeated release of a single captive, we hardened our hearts whenever birds were produced for our benefit. The little boys went through the most elaborately savage mimicry. We looked on, calmly. In actual fact, we observed, they never did their victims any harm. A bird, it was obvious, was far too valuable to be lightly killed; goldfinches during the tourist season laid golden eggs. Besides, they were really very nice little boys and fond of their pets. When they saw that we had seen through their tricks and could not be induced to pay ransom, they grinned up at us without malice and knowingly, as though we were their accomplices, and carefully put the birds away.

The importunity of the little boys was tiresome when one wanted to be alone. But if one happened to be in the mood for it, their company was exceedingly entertaining. The exploitation of the tourists was a monopoly which the most active of the children had arrogated, by force and cunning, to themselves. There was a little gang of them who shared the loot and kept competitors at a distance. By the time we left, we had got to know them very well. When we walked abroad, small strangers tried to join our party; but they were savagely driven away with shouts and blows. We were private property, no trespass-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing was tolerated. It was only by threatening to stop their wages that we could persuade the captains of the Nefta tourist industry to desist from persecuting their rivals. There was one particularly charming little boy — mythically beautiful, as only Arab children can be beautiful — who was the object of their special fury. The captains of the tourist industry were ugly; they dreaded the rivalry of this lovely child. And they were right; he was irresistible. We insisted on his being permitted to accompany us.

"But why do you send him away?" we asked.

"*Lui méchant*", the captains of industry replied in their rudimentary French. "*Lui casser un touriste.*"

"He smashed a tourist?" we repeated in some astonishment. They nodded. Blushing, even the child himself seemed reluctantly to admit the truth of their accusations. We could get no further explanations; none of them knew enough French to give them. "*Lui méchant. Lui casser un touriste.*" That was all we could discover. The lovely child looked at us appealingly. We decided to run the risk of being smashed and let him come with us. I may add that we came back from all our walks quite intact.

Under the palm trees, through that labyrinth of paths and running streams, we wandered interminably with our rabble of little guides. Most often it was to that part of the oasis called the *Corbeille* that we went. At the bottom of a rounded valley, theatre shaped and with smooth steep sides of sand, a score of springs suddenly gush out. There are little lakes, jade green like those pools beneath the cypresses of the Villa d'Este at Tivoli. Round their borders, the palm trees go jetting up, like fountains fixed in their upward aspiring gesture, their drooping crown of leaves a green spray arrested on the point of falling. Fountains of life — and five yards away the smooth unbroken slopes of sand glare in the sun. A little river flows out from the lakes, at first between high banks, then into an open sheet of water where the children paddle and bathe, the beasts come down to drink, the women do their washing. The river is the main road in this part of the oasis. The Arabs, when they want to get from place to place, tuck up their nightshirts and wade. Shoes and stockings, not to mention the necessity for keeping up a dignified prestige, do not permit Europeans to follow their example. It is only on muleback that Europeans use the river road. On foot, with our little guides, we had to scramble precariously on the slopes of crumbling banks, to go balancing across bridges made of a single palm stem, to overleap the mud walls of gardens. The owners of these gardens had a way of making us indirectly pay toll for our passage across their property. Politely, they asked us if we would like a drink of palm wine. It was impossible to say no; we protested that we should be delighted. With the agility of a monkey, a boy would fairly run up a palm tree to bring down with him a little earthenware pot full of the sap which flows from an incision made for the purpose at the top of the stem, in the centre of the crown of leaves. The pot, never too scrupulously clean, was offered to us; we had to drink, or at least pretend to drink, a horribly sickly fluid tasting of sugared water slightly flavored with the smell of fresh cabbage leaves. One was happy to pay a franc or two to be allowed to return the stuff untasted to the owner. I may add here that none of the drinks indigenous to Nefta are satisfactory. The palm juice makes one sick, the milk is rather goaty, and the water is impregnated

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with magnesia, has a taste of Carlsbad or Hunyadi Janos and produces on all but hardened drinkers of it the same physiological effects as do the waters of these more celebrated springs. There is no alternative but wine. And fortunately Tunisia is rich in admirable vintages. The red wines of Carthage are really delicious, and even the smallest of *vins ordinaires* are very drinkable.

A fertile oasis possesses a characteristic color scheme of its own, which is entirely unlike that of any landscape in Italy or the north. The fundamental note is struck by the palms. Their foliage, except where the stiff shiny leaves metallically reflect the light, is a rich blue-green. Beneath them, one walks in a luminous aquarium shadow, broken by innumerable vivid shafts of sunlight that scatter gold over the ground or, touching the trunks of the palm trees, make them shine a pale ashy pink through the subaqueous shadow. There is pink, too, in the glaring whiteness of the sand beyond the fringes of the oasis. Under the palms, beside the brown or jade colored water, glows the bright emerald green of corn or the deciduous trees of the north, with here and there the huge yellowish leaves of a banana tree, the smoky grey of olives or the bare, bone-white and writhing form of a fig tree.

As the sun gradually sinks, the aquarium shadow beneath the palm trees grows bluer, denser; you imagine yourself descending through layer after darkening layer of water. Only the pale skeletons of the fig trees stand out distinctly; the waters gleam like eyes in the dark ground; the ghost of a little marabout or chapel shows its domed silhouette, white and strangely definite in the growing darkness, through a gap in the trees. But looking up from the depths of this submarine twilight, one sees the bright pale sky of evening and against it, still touched by the level, rosily golden light, gleaming as though transmuted into sheets of precious metal, the highest leaves of the palm trees.

A little wind springs up; the palm leaves rattle together; it is suddenly cold. "*En avant*", we call. Our little guides quicken their pace. We follow them through the darkening mazes of the palm forest, out into the open. The village lies high on the desert plateau above the oasis, desert colored, like an arid outcrop of the tawny rock. We mount to its nearest gate. Through passageways between blank walls, under long dark tunnels the children lead us — an obscure and tortuous way which we never succeeded in thoroughly mastering, back to the square market-place at the centre of the town. The windows of the inn glimmer invitingly. At the door, we pay off the captains of industry and the little tourist smasher; we enter. Within the hotel it is provincial France.

For longer expeditions entailing the use of mules or asses, we had to take grown up guides. They knew almost as little French as the children and their intelligence was wrapped impenetrably in the folds of fatalism. Talking to an Islamically educated Arab is like talking to a pious European of the fourteenth century. Every phenomenon is referred by them to its final cause — to God. About the immediate causes of things — precisely how they happen — they seem to feel not the slightest interest. Indeed, it is not even admitted that there are such things as immediate causes: God is directly responsible for everything.

"Do you think it will rain?" you ask, pointing to menacing clouds overhead.

"If God wills", is the answer.

You pass the native hospital. "Are the doctors good?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"In our country", the Arab gravely replies in the tone of Solomon, "we say that doctors are of no avail. If Allah wills that a man shall die, he will die. If not, he will recover."

All of which is profoundly true, so true, indeed, that it is not worth saying. To the Arab, however, it seems the last word in human wisdom. For him, God is the perfectly adequate explanation of everything; he leaves fate to do things unassisted, in its own way — that is to say, from the human point of view, the worst way.

It is difficult for us to realize nowadays that our fathers once thought much as the Arabs do now. As late as the seventeenth century, the chemist Boyle found it necessary to protest against what I may call this Arabian view of things.

The Arabs were once the continuators of the Greek tradition; they produced men of science. They have relapsed — all except those who are educated according to Western methods — into pre-scientific fatalism, with its attendant incuriosity and apathy. They are the "dull enquirers who, demanding an account of the phenomena of a watch, rest satisfied with being told that it is an engine made by a watchmaker". The result of their satisfaction with this extremely unsatisfactory answer is that their villages look like the ruins of villages, that the blowflies sit undisturbedly feeding on the eyelids of those whom Allah has predestined to blindness, that half their babies die and that, politically, they are not their own masters.

It does not need much perspicacity to see that our Western civilization is not perfect; that it is, indeed, in many respects, repulsive and enormously stupid. But Eastern civilizations have their defects as well. The East is not all theosophy and ancient wisdom, as a great many people seem to suppose; bad smells and imbecility also enter into its composition — and copiously, too! The defects of the East, it seems to me, are graver even than ours. Its merits are in their way as great and, for individuals in the present, perhaps greater; but they promise much less for the future. Moreover, as a matter of historical fact, all that we regard as characteristically Eastern in oriental civilization, whether good or evil, is rapidly disappearing, to be replaced by the conquering goods and evils of the West. Religious mysticism and bad drains, artistic traditions and horrible superstition, fatalistic resignation and irresponsible despotism — all these admirable and detestable features of Eastern civilization are gradually, but with an ever increasing acceleration, being replaced by practical materialism and hygiene, the industrial system and modern science, restless dissipation of spirit and efficient government. Our current occidental ideas about the East are already out of date; it is only in backwaters, such as Nefta, and among the uneducated that our East still completely survives. Another hundred years and even Nefta will be Americanized. The thought, it must be admitted, is slightly depressing and would be much more so, if we supposed that America and western Europe were going to remain exactly what they are today. I am optimistic enough to believe that, a century hence, Western civilization will have been molded by the logic of circumstances and the intelligence of man into something, of whose presence beneath the palms and beside the jade-green waters of Nefta we shall have no reason to feel ashamed.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# AN APOLOGY FOR THE PULITZER PRIZE AWARDS

## By Herbert S. Gorman

IN the first place, there is a widely spread misconception concerning the purpose of the Pulitzer Prize Awards. It should be cleared up before we turn to the fortunate (and also unfortunate) recipients of those delightful thousand dollar checks (I believe they are checks although I have never seen one) which enliven each Columbia University commencement week and furnish copy for a month to the dear old "Literary Digest". This misconception is implicit in the natural belief of most hasty readers that the awards are given to the best book in its particular category and that by "best", literary excellence and high craftsmanship is meant. Well, that is not so at all. The founder of these awards was less interested in literature than he was in American ideals, and because of this there is a catch phrase in the conditions of each award. The books are supposedly specialized cases, although it seems to be true that the judges have not always been too particular in making sure that the prize winners absolutely fit the conditions. To be precise (and "The World Almanac" for 1925, to which the writer hastily resorted, ought to be precise enough), the awards are made for specific reasons which have not always to do with literary excellence. The fictional award, for instance, is "for the American novel published during the year which shall best present the wholesome atmosphere of American life, and the highest standard of American manners and manhood". Another is "for the best American biography teaching patriotic and unselfish services to the people, illustrated by an eminent example, excluding as too obvious, the names of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln". And then again "for the original American play performed in New York which shall best represent the educational value and power of the stage in raising the standard of good morals, good taste, and good manners". The awards for the best book of verse and the best book of the year upon the history of the United States do not appear to be so conditioned as the foregoing. Perhaps it was realized that poets are a hopeless lot anyway and that historians are inclined to tell the truth whether or not it fits in with "good morals, good taste, good manners", etc. As to the allied awards to various newspapers for reporting, editorials, and kindred "bests" it is, perhaps, simpler to ignore them and confine our attention to the five categories already mentioned, each of which, it is to be presumed, contains lasting work.

Now let us brood on the conditions that outline the objectives of the awards. Let us sit in a dark room and concentrate upon the purpose of these prizes. If we except poetry and history, it becomes manifest that pure literary excellence is not the prime goal of these jolly thousand dollar checks.



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

They mean to flutter into no pocket of any "art for art's sake" scribbler. They are ethical awards, not perhaps as obvious as the colored Bible pictures which the bright little Sunday School scholar used to take home with him for preeminence in bounding Palestine but, still and all, rewards for virtue. We must not go too far in predicating that literary qualifications are excess baggage when it comes to securing one of these awards. Horatio Alger, high as his moral tone was, would probably be passed by. After all, the judges are men of intelligence and they understand workmanship of an obviously finished sort when they see it. Even though the high subtleties of the matter evade them, they are wise enough to insist on agreeable scholarship, mature expression, and a subject matter that will never bore readers with abstractions.

It is therefore as futile on the one hand to cavil against the Pulitzer Awards as it is to accept them on the other hand as authorized selections of the best literature of the year. Their limitations of choice are clearly defined and there is no particular reason why they should not continue to exist as they are. An award may be established for anything, even for the best statue of Venus that most closely approximates the late Queen Victoria, and there is no justice in attacking the judges when they prefer to observe the limitations of the award. They are doing no more than the duty that has been thrust upon them. The importance of such specialized awards is another matter altogether. If it is impossible to regard the Pulitzer Awards very seriously (and it is impossible to most critics who have a progressive love of literature at heart), it does not follow that they are to be disparaged for being what they are plainly meant to be. Now let us see what the various awards have been. The poetry award is the youngest and most satisfying in point of judgment; therefore it may be noted first. Here is the list:

1922 — Edwin Arlington Robinson for "Collected Poems".
1923 — Edna St. Vincent Millay for "The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver" and, apparently, for some odd magazine verse.
1924 — Robert Frost.
1925 — Edwin Arlington Robinson for "The Man Who Died Twice".

There seems to be a surprising justice in these awards, and the reason may lie in a refreshing lack of conditions limiting them. Surely Edwin Arlington Robinson is the very best of our living poets; the fact that he has taken the award twice is indicative of the acumen of the judges. Robert Frost in a lesser degree occupies a notable place, and he too was deserving of the award. There is slighter reason for the inclusion of Miss Millay, although it is impossible not to admit her tremendous popularity and the rather insidious appeal of her lyrical work. If an expression of American ideals, contemporary ideals, is implicit in these poetry awards, it is at least not outrageously noticeable in the work of the three poets. All three are personal poets, although perhaps Mr. Frost is one to a lesser degree than the others. Mr. Robinson's pulse, for instance, may be nationalistic but it does not beat quite in rhythm with the so called "higher manifestations" of the day. And there is no mistaking Miss Millay. She is always Miss Millay to the exclusion of everything else.

It is in the novel award, perhaps, that most popular interest is aroused, and it is against this award that most objections have been made. The list for the last eight years is both strange and enlightening:

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1918 — Ernest Poole for "His Family".
1919 — Booth Tarkington for "The Magnificent Ambersons".
1920 — No award.
1921 — Edith Wharton for "The Age of Innocence".
1922 — Booth Tarkington for "Alice Adams".
1923 — Willa Cather for "One of Ours".
1924 — Margaret Wilson for "The Able McLaughlins".
1925 — Edna Ferber for "So Big".

Booth Tarkington, it will be observed, has twice received the award, and this very fact is illuminating as to the intentions of the judges. Surely Mr. Tarkington, with his agreeable naturalism, his careful avoidance of anything that might be described as distastefully realistic, his humor and capable characterization, goes a long way toward fulfilling the demand for a presentation of "the wholesome atmosphere of American life". As to whether or not he presents "the highest standard of American manners and manhood" I cannot say. In the first place, this phrasing would have to be defined. What is "the highest standard of American manners and manhood"? Is it intellectual or moral? Is it Walt Whitman or William Jennings Bryan?

It will be noted that in seven awards but two men have been honored (Ernest Poole taking a seat in glory beside Mr. Tarkington), while no less than four women have borne away the golden check. There is but little that can be said about Mr. Poole. He is a conscientious craftsman of decided limitations. But more can be said about the women. At least two of them, Mrs. Wharton and Miss Cather, are contemporary literary figures of prime importance. Here, certainly, the literary impulse is to be found among the winners, although it is obvious that it was not on literary grounds that "The Age of Innocence" and "One of Ours" received the awards. In spite of being a good book, "The Age of Innocence" fulfils the conditions of the award. It does present the "wholesome atmosphere of American life" and the "highest standard of American manners and manhood", a defunct standard, of course, because of the time period of the book. I am not so sure about "One of Ours", although it may be granted that it is literature. Miss Ferber's best seller, "So Big" (it made a mighty nice movie for Colleen Moore), and Miss Wilson's "The Able McLaughlins", a good and painstaking "try", are self explanatory. The judges were limiting themselves strictly to the letter of their prescribed duty. We come now to the lucky plays:

1918 — Jesse Lynch Williams for "Why Marry?"
1919 — No award.
1920 — Eugene O'Neill for "Beyond the Horizon".
1921 — Zona Gale for "Miss Lulu Bett".
1922 — Eugene O'Neill for "Anna Christie".
1923 — Owen Davis for "Icebound".
1924 — Hatcher Hughes for "Hell-Bent fer Heaven".
1925 — Sidney Howard for "They Knew What They Wanted".

And here we have our third double prize winner in Mr. O'Neill. He belongs to that trio, the other units of which are E. A. Robinson and Booth Tarkington. It would naturally be assumed that the writer who carried off the highest award in the country twice in seven years would just about be at the head of his particular field; in Mr. O'Neill's case it may be readily admitted that this is so. Certainly no other American playwright has given so much, if we take into consideration "Beyond the Horizon", "Anna Christie", "The Emperor Jones", and "The Hairy Ape". O'Neill is essentially American, a born dramatist if ever there was one. It is difficult to see how "Beyond the Horizon" and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Anna Christie" "best represent the educational value and power of the stage in raising the standard of good morals, good taste, and good manners", but then, it is quite possible that the judges winked rapidly at this conditioning when the awards were decided. And so, in the case of poetry, where the judges were not limited, and in drama, where they complacently ignored the limitations set upon them, we find the most admirable awards, awards bestowed upon creations with some enduring fibre.

The other drama awards do not (to a prejudiced observer) appear to be as successful, except perhaps in the case of "They Knew What They Wanted". Mr. Howard's play possesses the vitality of excellent drama and real life. "Why Marry?", "Miss Lulu Bett", "Icebound", and "Hell-Bent fer Heaven" were the creations of a day and they are practically forgotten now. If any of them raised "the standard of good morals, good taste, and good manners" the effect is yet to make itself evident. With which impertinently dogmatic statement the writer passes on blithely to the biographies:

1917 — Laura E. Richards and Maude Howe Elliott, assisted by Florence Howe Hall, for "Julia Ward Howe".
1918 — William Cabell Bruce for "Benjamin Franklin, Self-Revealed".
1919 — (*post obit*) Henry Adams for "The Education of Henry Adams".
1920 — Albert J. Beveridge for "The Life of John Marshall".
1921 — Edward W. Bok for "The Americanization of Edward Bok".
1922 — Hamlin Garland for "A Daughter of the Middle Border".
1923 — Burton J. Hendrick for "The Life and Letters of Walter H. Page".
1924 — Professor Michael Pupin for "From Immigrant to Inventor".
1925 — M. A. DeWolfe Howe for "Barrett Wendell, His Life and Letters".

It will be noticed that autobiographies are quite as qualified for the award as biographies. Whether or not a man writing about himself can teach "patriotic and unselfish services to the people" and illustrate them by "an eminent example" is possibly dependent on the man's own modesty. At least we begin to get warm, so to speak, as to what the conditions of the award aim at when "the highest standard of American manners and manhood" is sonorously rolled from the tongue. Taking the subjects of these biographical volumes as natural examples of "the highest standard" (for how else would the judges happen on these particular worthies?), we are led into the august company of a strangely mixed group. Indeed, it seems to divide rather evenly. Before 1921 we find Julia Ward Howe, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Adams, and John Marshall. But after 1921 the aspect abruptly shifts from one of historical perspective to contemporary phenomena. In the earlier category we find a poet, a statesman and nation builder, a distinguished and analytic observer of national development, and a brilliant judge. The later classification includes a popular magazine editor, a late frontier settler, an ex-publisher and ambassador, an inventor, and a college professor. To be quite direct, we have Edward Bok, Hamlin Garland, Walter H. Page, Professor Michael Pupin, and Professor Barrett Wendell. It is presumable that the books concerning this quintet are the best of those teaching "patriotic and unselfish services to the people, illustrated by an eminent example, excluding as too obvious, the names of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln". It is presumable, I say, although I am not at all convinced. It would be interesting to ferret out the psychology which caused the shift from the dead and lasting figures of such as Julia Ward Howe, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Adams, and John Marshall, to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

such uncertain fixtures as Mr. Bok, Mr. Page, and Professor Wendell, for instance. Is it the new biography? Or is it an increasing concern for our own times? With which questions I pass on to the histories:

1917 — Jules J. Jusserand for "With Americans of Past and Present Days".
1918 — James Forbes Rhodes for "A History of the Civil War".
1919 — No award.
1920 — Justin H. Smith for "The War with Mexico".
1921 — Admiral Sims for "The Victory at Sea".
1922 — James Truslow Adams for "The Founding of New England".
1923 — Charles Warren for "The Supreme Court in United States History".
1924 — Charles Howard McIlwain for "The American Revolution".
1925 — Frederick L. Paxson for "The History of the American Frontier".

Here, as in the poetry awards, there do not appear to be the usual conditions insisting on "wholesome atmosphere" and "raising the standard". Perhaps the obvious fact that history to be history must be impartial, and that to be impartial it must be inclusive, emphasized the impossibility of any such limitations. You cannot make history exude a particular atmosphere without lifting certain factors in it to disproportionate altitudes at the expense of other factors. The Pulitzer Awards in this category appear to be sound enough, although the fortunate books represent decidedly differing standards. M. Jusserand's volume, for instance, is a more purely personal affair than James Forbes Rhodes's "History of the Civil War", and the same comparison might hold between Admiral Sims's book and "The American Revolution" of Charles Howard McIlwain. There is an excellent variety in the eight awards, however, and it is interesting to observe how six of the titles, rearranged, fall into a skeleton outline of American history. They are: "The Founding of New England", "The American Revolution", "The War with Mexico", "The History of the American Frontier", "A History of the Civil War", and "The Victory at Sea".

In the nine seasons of awards that have been made, certain aspects stand out. Three people, all creative and concerned primarily with literature as literature, have obtained the award twice. Historians and biographers apparently do not repeat. The greatest shift in attitude seems to be that in the biography category. It has been in the awards to the novelists that the judges have most closely adhered to the spirit implicit in the founder's intentions. The first four novel awards seem to have leaned toward the urban, while the last three have turned to the country. Perhaps there is a vague parallel of the trend of American fiction here. The most admirable awards, from the point of view of literature, have been in poetry and drama. It is possible that these differing aspects are occasioned by the particular judges who have the difficult duty of deciding who's who in "wholesome" American letters.

Anyway, it becomes obvious that it is highly unfair to attack these awards on literary grounds. The specific conditions that circumscribe them and limit them to a portion of the American literary output give the judges no loophole. Either they must ignore the precise conditions, as they have done apparently in the drama awards, or follow them, as has been the case with the novels. In either case the result is unimportant. No award can do more than briefly help a bad book or play, and the lack of an award (which is the condition of practically all that is best in American literature outside of poetry and drama) can never injure a good book.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THREE ROUSING CHEERS!!!

*The Parody Adventures of Our Youthful Heroes*

## IV: THE ROLLO BOYS AMONG THE CRAZY FOOLS

### OR, A PARODY OUTLINE OF HUMOR

By Corey Ford

*With Sketches by Gluyas Williams*

THIS is a story about three crazy fools named Dick Rollo and Tom Rollo and Harry Rollo, who inherited an insane asylum from their uncle, Mr. Stewart.

Mr. Benchley was in the insane asylum, and Mr. Leacock, and Mr. Rogers and Mr. Marquis and Mr. Milne, and a humorist who part of the time was Mr. Lardner and part of the time a Mr. H. C. Witwer of New York, although he didn't use the same names for his characters always.

When they inherited the asylum the Rollo Boys were living in an impressive building called Merriwell Hall, where they had come during the Spanish-American War and remained ever since, making their total age 14 including the fact that there were three of them and they seemed to get younger every year. They had never gone to college, although Dick Rollo had been through Columbia once on a sightseeing bus, but outside of that they had never had any education to speak of, although they often did.

"We are the three Rollo Boys", Tom Rollo would say over and over again for the 568th time, "and since we have come to Merriwell Hall we have had many numerous adventures, so many in fact that they can scarcely be hinted at here, as related in full in the list on the back cover!" and then he would bite off the end of his cigar and place it in his change pocket, because he always bit off the ends of cigars and placed them in his change pocket, to save to smoke in a pipe. He also saved theatre stubs, cigarette coupons, and a small piece of peanut brittle named Mildred. And his mother's name was Quetch, if *that* makes it any funnier.

"Are the three Rollo Boys here?" asked an unexpected voice one fine day on Wednesday the twenty fourth of May, which oddly enough is the very date this story opens and no one more surprised than I, either; and a stranger entered Merriwell Hall with nothing in his hand but a Yale pennant and kindly blue eyes.

"Yes", replied the three Rollo Boys confidently; and they were right, because there they were, sure enough. "But what can you want", asked Dick, "of they who were these unfortunate young men?"

"Your uncle has died", replied Mr. Stewart, "and you must come at once and help us to escape from our insane asylum."

"Who are you?" asked Harry.

"I am your uncle", replied Mr. Stewart.

"But we haven't got an uncle", said Tom.



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Yes, you have", insisted Mr. Stewart persistently.

"How is he?" asked Dick numbly.

"He is dead", replied the stranger, "and you're the sole heir to his insane asylum. You must come at once and help us to escape", he repeated; and with that he hit his horse a terrific slash and they drove down the road, which changed presently into a railroad train and then into an ocean liner for no particular reason, except possibly that it was a very easy way of writing.

"We don't seem to be moving", said Tom five minutes later, glancing out the window as Mr. Stewart set down the breakfast menu beside them and whispered: "Your scalp is very dry, sir. Not a cocoanut oil shampoo, perhaps?"

"No," agreed Dick, "and please have it sent."

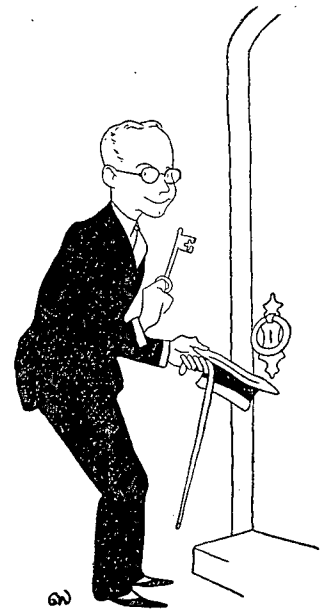
"Shall I have it sent to 129 Oglethorpe Road, Staten Island?" suggested Mr. Stewart insinuatingly.

"Well, I don't know", hesitated Dick. "I've never been to Staten Island."

"Perhaps you would like to see some of our attractive Staten Island lots", suggested Mr. Stewart, leaning smilingly over the desk of the Golden Mean Real Estate Office.

"No," interrupted Dick peevishly, "and I wish you would stay one thing or the other. You keep shifting around as if you were Lewis Carroll, and it's very annoying", he complained, as the scene suddenly changed to a courtroom and then to a Turkish Bath. "Besides, I think we ought to be getting on to the asylum pretty soon, if you are ever going to finish this book tonight."

"This is the asylum right here", replied Mr. Stewart, taking out a big key and unlocking the door, and shutting it again very quickly so as not to let in a lot of people who write for "Judge" and "The Saturday Evening Post".



*"This is the asylum right here", replied Mr. Stewart.*

"We have to be very careful", explained Mr. Stewart, putting back the key in his pocket again. "It's worse than the Lambs Club."

"If I am not too inquisitive," said Dick, "may I ask a question, Mr. ——"

"My name is Swift", replied Mr. Stewart. "Jonathan Swift; and you may ask me anything."

"Well, then," said Dick, "I don't see why you can't escape from here if you have the key right in your pocket."

"That's just it", said Mr. Stewart, bursting into tears. "My public won't let me. It's the Tragedy of my life", he sobbed.

"Oh, come now, come on, old man", said Dick hurriedly. "I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. Look, why, everybody is watching you, Mr. Swift. Be a big boy, now, and let Dick wipe your eyes, and all the people will say what a little soldier you are."

"Well, I'm not the only one at that",

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

smiled Mr. Stewart through his tears, as he noticed a stout gentleman with a black cigar between his lips, who was telling his favorite story to a syndicate. "There's Mr. Cobb, and then there's Mr. Percy Crosby and Mr. Herold and Mr. Ade and Mr. Kaufman and Connelly and Mr. Milt Gross (just arrived) and all the other fellows. We want to do Bigger and Better Things."

"Why don't you?" inquired Tom. "Better, anyway", he added merrily.

"We are humorists, you see," sighed Mr. Stewart, "and the public has put us here in this asylum, the lousy bums, and now we've got to amuse them. It's our Ordeal, I guess", he sighed. "The old, old story. . . . "

"Isn't it", agreed Harry.

"I want to write a novel very badly", sighed Mr. Stewart.

"That ought not to be hard", fired back fun loving Tom Rollo. Tom liked to pull the wings off horseflies, particularly eagles; and as a result of his reputation for pranks people were always seeking him out, sometimes with bloodhounds.

"Mr. Stewart", interrupted Dick suddenly. "This state of affairs cannot go on. We must organize. For this purpose I should suggest an Organization Department, consisting of Mr. Stewart." Mr. Stewart bowed. "And now if Mr. Stewart will appoint a Secretary we can have the minutes of the previous meeting."

"I think Mr. Broun would be a good Secretary", said Mr. Stewart, looking expectantly toward him for approval, possibly in his column.

"Bulletin", remarked Mr. Adams suddenly. "Scribe Cops Coveted Post as Mates Vie in Prose Tilt."

"It seems to me, though," drawled Mr. Broun, shifting uncomfortably in his chair, "that I would make a better Corresponding Secretary", he explained, running his fingers through his hair. "Then I could print the letters", he added, untying his necktie.

" — more of a dotted Swiss, or even a point d'esprit, like, I thought", began a lady seated in the front row; "but no, her Royal Highness must have piano lessons — four-ninety-eight an hour, if you please. Well, everybody always told me I ought to do something with my Art, but what with one thing or another — "

"Order, please!" interrupted Dick Rollo, beating very loudly on the round table with his gavel, as a short nervous gentleman walked rapidly toward the recent speaker. "I wonder if I could include you in my Anthology, Mrs. Parker?" he asked. "What have you written funny?"

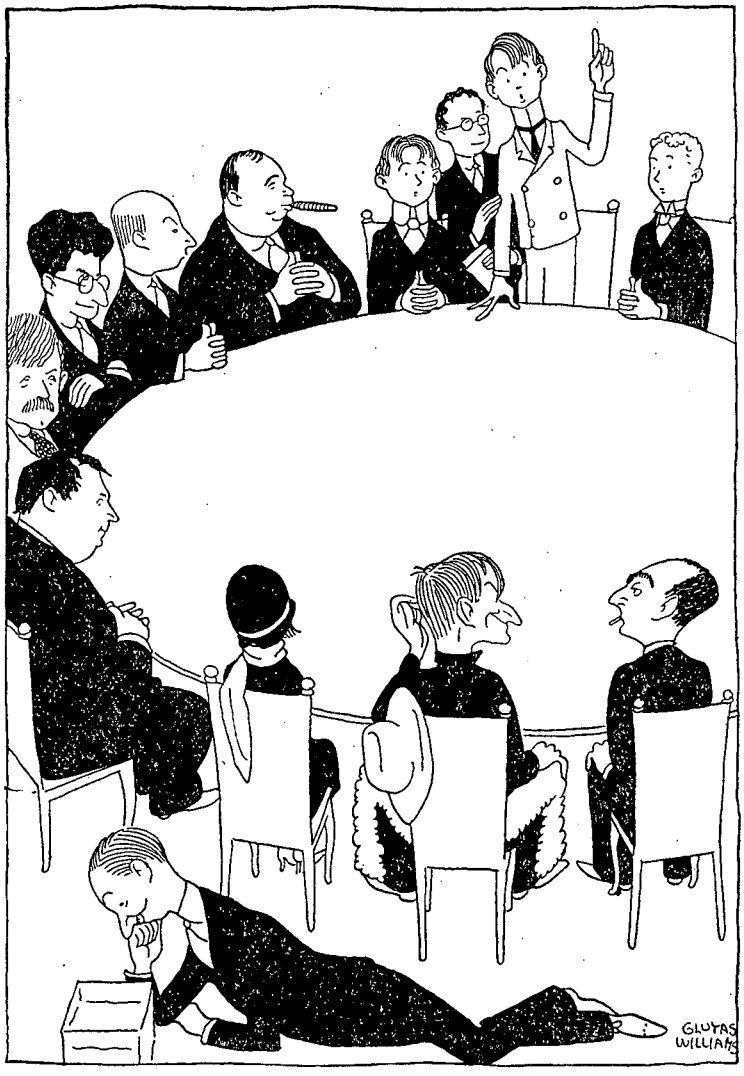
"The meeting will come to order, Mr. Masson, please", repeated Dick Rollo reverently; and when Mr. Masson was through the meeting *did* come to order, just as Dick had predicted. "We shall dispense with the minutes of the previous meeting, and in its place we shall have the Treasurer's Report."

"Mr. Benchley is our Treasurer", whispered Mr. Stewart sadly, pointing to a man lying on his stomach before a glass aquarium and studying it intently; "but he is very busy with some scientific work just now."

"What is he doing?" inquired Harry, bending over him.

"I am studying the newt", replied Mr. Benchley himself. "I have practically lived among newts for several years, ever since I became a dramatic critic," he added, rising on his elbows to face his interviewer, "and I find that the newt differs very radically from the bicycle, particularly in the matter of sex. In the spring of 1903, in an effort to investigate the love life of these lowliest of God's little creatures, I placed a male newt and a female

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED




*"Stop!" cried Tom Rollo suddenly. "I have an idea!"*



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bicycle in the same room together, and locked the door. At the end of three weeks I unlocked the door again", concluded Mr. Benchley sadly, "and threw away the newt. I rode off on the bicycle myself."

"You have all heard the report of the Treasurer", said Dick. "Are there any suggestions to offer?"

"I suggest the report be incorporated in my coming Anthology", said Mr. Masson; and the suggestion was adopted, by Mr. Masson.

"That brings us to Unfinished Business", said Dick Rollo, when quiet was restored; "and first under the head of Unfinished Business I should like to hear from the head of the Entertainment Committee, Mr. Rogers."

"Wal," said the cowboy, hobbling across the room in his leather chaps and dragging his lariat, "reckon all I know (laughter) is what I see by the papers (laughter and applause). There'll be another piece in here two weeks from now", he added over his shoulder, as Mr. Masson followed him out. "Watch for it."

"Before this meeting adjourns", said Dick Rollo, rapping for order, "I should like with your permission to bring up a matter which is of interest to all of us, and which is, in my opinion, sufficiently important to warrant our taking at least a few minutes for informal discussion before this meeting adjourns. I refer", said Dick, "to the question of how we are going to escape from this asylum."

"To Hon. Mr. President Rollo," said Mr. Irwin, rising politely, "I renig very sly play from Japanese schoolboy, wherein would snuggest that Hon. Irv Cobb shall simply narrate a brite & snapper niggero antidote, with Jewish names by Montague Glass, so to deliver American public into deep slumber when we can escape, or perhapsly they will laugh their selfs to death. Hoping you are the same."

"Are there any criticisms?" asked Dick Rollo, as Mr. Rea Irvin drew a chair, from force of habit, and Mr. Irwin sat down.

"Ham!" ejaculated Mr. Sherwood suddenly; and that was the first and last remark Mr. Sherwood was heard to make that afternoon.

"The Rev. Dr. Irwin does not hesitate to call a spade a bedspring", interposed Mr. Nathan, reaching for his hat; "but unless Memory has pinned a 'Please Kick Me' Sign to my *Sitzfleisch*, I doubt whether I have ever heard such a yoshiwara combination of bellywash, *hokus pokus*, and flapdoodle — "

"Stop!" cried Tom Rollo suddenly. "I have an idea!" And a moment later all the humorists were rolling around the floor in peals of laughter, even though they were humorists.

## CHAPTER SIXTY EIGHT

QUICK, Tom!"

"Where, Dick!"

"Here, Harry!"

While the puzzled humorists watched in amazement, the three Rollo Boys silently unpacked a number of wooden crates, taking out armloads of books with which they filled every room in the asylum. Then with a merry wink, Tom Rollo seized the asylum bell and tolled it wildly, while the public poured into the building from all sides with eager shouts.

"Follow me!" whispered the fun loving Rollo, leading the humorists on tiptoe past the engrossed public, who sat with their noses buried in the strange volumes and took no notice

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

whatsoever of their escape. And then as Tom Rollo slyly turned Mr. Stewart's key in the lock of the asylum, the tumbling, laughing crazy fools rushed out into the open air in search of Bigger and Better Things, while Mr. Nathan and Mr. Woollcott played at clap-handies in the sand, and Mr. Butler went back to raising guinea pigs again, and Mr. Hellman stopped writing, and Mr. Broun donned his baseball uniform and set out to find his audience once more.

"We have captured the public at last", laughed Tom merrily, as he dropped the asylum key down a well.

"But what were the books?" inquired Mr. Stewart eagerly.

"'The Rollo Boys Series for Young Americans'", replied the three Rollo Boys as one.

"Three rousing cheers for the Rollo Boys!" shouted the relieved humorists, tossing their responsibilities in the air and cheering lustily.

The cheers were given with a will; but the contents of that will, and how it affected the fortunes not only of our young heroes, but also of the author and his publishers, will all be related in the next volume of this series, to be entitled: "The Rollo Boys with Sherlock in Mayfair; or, Keep It Under Your Green Hat."

And here let us say Good-By.

*Good-By.*

## PRUNED TREES

By Gloria Goddard

A THIN shrill row of poplars,
Pruned to wall a road,
Stand stiff against the sun.
Each limb is cut to measure;
Almost the leaves are numbered;
Their narrow heads pain-pierce
The unreached sky.
Their beauty trapped they stand
Defiant!
And burn their shadow bars
Across the road they guard.
Their leaves hum unlearned madrigals
To the winking sun;
They fling clandestine kisses
To a comrade cloud. . . .
With synchronized solemnity
They yield obeisance to the manor . . .
And laugh . . . derisively!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# MY DEAR WALPOLE*

## An Open Letter from H. L. Mencken

MY DEAR WALPOLE:

You raise two main objections to that poor article. The first is that it was written in a style which seems to you to have been unduly violent. The second is that some of its judgments were in contempt of "the finest critical minds".

The first is plainly irrelevant. I write as I please, and as I am. I could no more write the jargon of an Oxford don than an Oxford don could write good American. Here in America we have plenty of dons of our own — for example, Bliss Perry, of Harvard. But I certainly shouldn't want to write like one of them, or to be one of them. In this matter you must allow me some freedom of choice. If I violate English pruderies I can only regret it politely. I am not an Englishman, but an American.

As for "the finest critical minds", I can only recall to you that I have spent twenty years trying to prove that many of them, so called, are in the heads of donkeys. Whether I have got anywhere with this altruistic endeavor I don't know. But I seem to notice that "the finest critical minds" are less influential in the Republic than they used to be. At any rate, all the authors they once tried to put down are prospering now: for example, Dreiser, Cabell, Anderson. And all the authors they whooped up seem to be dead: for example, Howells, Ernest Poole, Henry Sydnor Harrison, James Lane Allen, Hamlin Garland, Mrs. Atherton.

You hint that I'd have "acclaimed" Arnold Bennett's novel, "Riceyman Steps", if the author had been an American. I leave this insinuation to a candid world — and you to the mercy of God. What American has spent more time acclaiming sound English work than I have? I began with Kipling in 1901, in the first criticism I ever wrote. But don't ask me to speak of the H. G. Wells of today as if he were the Wells of "Mr. Polly", or of the Arnold Bennett as if he were the Bennett of "The Old Wives' Tale". And don't ask me to accept gravely the rhetoric of your log rollers, as in the case of Miss Mansfield, or that of your advertising agents, as in that of Arlen. I believe that Americans of the more reflective sort have had a dreadful overdose of such bilge.

I observe a number of articles on the general subject of Anglo-American literary relations in the current English weeklies. There seems to be a rising impression in your fair land that all is not well. If Englishmen would make the situation better I suggest two courses to them:

1. Let them abandon the assumption that any way of doing things that differs from the correct English way is a wrong way.

2. Let them admit it frankly when they are guilty of second rate work.

I say nothing about the hostility to American authors among the majority of English reviewers. I don't believe it is of any importance. Every Ameri-

* See Mr. Walpole's letter in November.



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can writer of any skill and dignity is used to denunciation. He gets it from imitation Englishmen at home, and so it doesn't bother him much when it is repeated by genuine Englishmen in England. But neither, I believe, does it magnify the majesty and puissance of English reviewing.

The plain fact is that the Republic has cut the painter, and has begun to go it alone. There is, no doubt, a wrench. It is, I suppose, painful. But I don't know of anything that is to be done about it.

As ever,

H. L. MENCKEN.

## FOR RIP WHO DIED MAD

By William Alexander Percy

WHEN I go down to Acheron,
A tired lonely shade,
I'll wish the hand of some sweet ghost,
Once dear, in mine were laid;

And ferrying that murky flood
The valiant scorn to drink,
I'll strain to see the dead I love
Down at the landing's brink.

Far off in blue and silver glens
Where melts the folded mist,
They will be loitering blissfully
In cloaks of amethyst.

But as my prow scrapes on the marl,
One watcher faithful, quaint,
Will dash to meet me who am still
His master, friend, and saint.

And Rip with paws upon my breast
And warm breath on my hair
Will tell with little snuggled whines
How long was waiting there,

And how the madness is quite gone
That turned his heart untrue.
I shall have lost, please Proserpine,
Somewhat of madness, too.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# SPEAKING OF BEARS

## By Mary Austin

*With Sketches by Margaret Freeman*

ANY good bear story is bound to have as many layers as a quamash root. Take that one which you know in the form in which Seaforth's publishers announced it as our most charming nature saga, "The Bears of Quamash". I came across the germinating core of that some fifteen years before the Most Distinguished Citizen quarreled with Seaforth about it, in one of those tall old San Francisco houses, just beyond the devouring line of the great fire of 1906. It was then the home of a man whom it pleased people who knew him best to call the Historian. I had never known him in any other character than that and my good friend, with the light making a halo round the polished dome of his historian's head as he looked up from his labors to minister an occasional sop to my endless curiosity about the old west. On one of these occasions he showed me a thick fine printed volume, the first from his hand, and the only traceable copy left after a fire had destroyed the first edition and the original plates a few days after publication.

It was the story of one Samuel Adams, a mild mannered, blue eyed trapper of the scaldic temperament who had made a business of supplying European zoos and circuses with cougars and bears for twenty years before gold was first washed out of the Ventura sands. On one of the occasions when Adams had come down with his captive train to the mission town of San Francisco, which he found mysteriously grown to a world port, my friend had discovered him, and constituted himself the historian of Adams's adventures. "It was the most fun I ever



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had", sighed the historian. "Such fresh and unlettered and authentic material. It was like playing amanuensis to Robinson Crusoe just off the Island . . . but you can't get publishers interested in these things nowadays . . . they want their material *fictionized!*" He brought the word out with an accent that checked a proposal on my lips that I do something like that with it myself if the stuff was really as good as he thought it was. That was the last of the matter for fifteen years.

In the meantime Seaforth succeeded in making the adventures of the hunted sound as absorbing as the lives of the hunters, and produced as his masterpiece "The Bears of Quamash". The tale was so much and favorably talked about that it attracted the attention of the Most Distinguished Citizen, who had also specialized in bears and who took exception to some of Seaforth's statements.

It is the penalty of the Most Distinguished that whatever they say is immediately taken up and elaborated by people without any distinction whatever; in this case with the result that to Seaforth's full blown reputation there were attached the weasel words of "nature faking".

I had happened, once or twice, to cross Seaforth's trail while he was engaged in his sincere and almost anxious search for authenticity of background, and I knew enough of the man to be certain he would be immeasurably hurt by the charge of fakery. At the same time I was puzzled at his failure to make a more effective defense and, in particular, to insist on the authenticity of the main incidents of the Quamash story, for it was part of his method never to invent incident, but only the machinery by which his story was articulated. He was a man of such transparent honesty as made it certain he would never set down anything which he did not believe to be true. At the same time his simplicity laid him open to the possibility of believing things that had been told him as true, on no other evidence than his own prepossession toward honesty.

All this was so freshly in my mind the next time I crossed trails with him — quite unexpectedly at Summerfield, where I had gone to be present at the annual parting of the flocks — that I could hardly have avoided speaking of it.

Seaforth was to lecture that night at the Woman's Club, whose undying censure I had earned by smuggling him away from their afternoon reception to Noriega's shearing, where the inspiriting smell of dust and wool mixed with creosote and native claret had proved more potent than the half fermented wine of praise. We were still slightly under that enchantment when we found ourselves happily islanded, after the lecture was over, on the roof of the Summerfield hotel, deserted by everybody but one pale reproachful waiter.

There was a bright, low moon standing off to the west over Temblor, and a low round moon of the clock tower glinting at us from between the acanthus trees. Now and then a warm billow of air reached us from the superheated earth, heavy with the scent of the spring gardens and the crude oil with which the desert sand had been firmed into streets. We talked and talked; and there was no other noise than the tinkling of the ice in the tall glasses and the far off call of a coyote from the hills, keeping the tale of the new shorn flocks.

Seaforth told me all about his discussion with the Distinguished Citizen, whose estimate of the intelligence of wild things was trimmed to his practice

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of successfully hunting them. Besides the fact that I would rather hear a bear story from a man who has loved bears than from one who has merely killed them, I was on Seaforth's side. His methods were precisely the same as any novelist pursues in search of the human story, skilfully compounded of observation and intuition, and in comparison with the amount of human nature faking which goes on in the monthly magazines — ! At all events, I was sufficiently on his side for him to be willing to tell me circumstantially how he came to write "The Bears of Quamash".

He had always wanted to write a bear story. For years he had absorbed veracious information about bears, from books and from everybody he met, and his own honesty was of such an engaging sort that it would have been a mean soul indeed who could tell him anything unworthy to be believed. I judged, however, that he had met one or two such souls. He had, he told me himself, met Al Kellerman.

Kellerman was the pinwheel of the Kurtz News Syndicate, perpetually going around in a whirl of journalistic coruscations with the effect of giving off light which never really lightened anything. He had been a young man of parts, and Kurtz had made him so absolutely to his purpose that when I tell you that Kellerman admired Kurtz and Kurtz was entirely satisfied with Al, I have said the best, and the worst, of both of them. It was Kellerman who had been sent, in the absence of any more compelling headline material, to find the cub grizzly, Muckamuck, which was later presented to the city park in the interest of natural history and increased circulation. All this had occurred several years before Seaforth rose to prominence as the writer of nature sagas, and it was the sight of old Muckamuck wheeling his ton or so of grizzly haunch to and fro behind the bars of his pit at the zoo, that had fired my friend with the desire to write the life history of a grizzly. He had the really bright idea of making it the life of Muckamuck, because a personal instance is always so much more appealing, and it sells better, which is a lawful consideration.

It was natural, under these circumstances, that the incidents of the cub's capture in Seaforth's story should bear some resemblance to the facts as set forth by Kellerman in the letters which he had sent to Kurtz's "Messenger" from time to time during the whole six weeks of his expedition. Seaforth made allowance for the exigencies of newspaper reporting, but he said he felt that, on the whole, Kellerman must have stuck pretty closely to the facts, because of the similarity of the incidents of Kellerman's story to things he had read in a book of unimpeachable veracity.

Below us in the street a team of Basque handball players who had just beaten the visiting professional French team from Los Alamos passed on their triumphant processional from shrine to shrine of the *genius loci*. That is to say, they were making the round of the local bars, gloriously claret drunk, singing an ancient herder's ditty, all the implications of which led us so far afield, and so much deeper into the intimacy of the open, that it ended with Seaforth stripping off another layer, and the sorest, of his story of the story. The waiter, having replenished our glasses, was asleep with his head on a table, and the moon rode well into the middle heaven.

Seaforth finished the manuscript of "The Bears of Quamash" after six weeks' camping in Quamash meadows to make sure of his background. Then, to attest the honesty of his intention,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he went home by way of Los Alamos where he had learned that Kellerman was to be found, wiring ahead for the journalist to meet him. His idea was to read Kellerman his story and to get Kellerman's own notion of just what gracious acknowledgment of indebtedness for the incident of the capture should accompany its publication. The dinner was at the Angelus, one of those repasts which the easterner knows so well how to pluck from our too profligate board: abalone broth, sand dabs, Seco squabs, avacodas, and that bright crimson native wine which goes around the Horn in barrels and comes back to us at double the price under Italian labels.

Between the courses there were delicate Mexican cigarettes wrapped in cornhusk, and instalments of the story. One hopes the newspaper man appreciated his privilege. At any rate he expressed a genial approval; said it was a good story, and that the stuff always belonged to the man who could use it best, as could be proved by reference to the well known William Shakespeare; and that for himself, he preferred to have no personal mention dim the bright lustre of Seaforth's achievement. Then he went home, wrote what he could remember of Seaforth's story, and published it over his own name in next Sunday's supplement of the Los Alamos "Times".

Seaforth, who went east on the midnight flyer, did not see the "Times", of course; not until after his own story had appeared. Not, indeed, until the Most Distinguished Citizen had reviewed it.

Then some seventy of his friends and enemies sent him clippings of Kellerman's version of his own version of Kellerman's original story. Fortunately Seaforth had covered himself by mailing a copy of his manuscript to his publishers a week before his meeting with Kellerman; but you see his position with the public.

If Kellerman's original account of the capture of Muckamuck were true, he had as much right as had Seaforth to republish it as the basis of a fiction story. Since Kellerman's account had been used by Seaforth without acknowledgment, there was no way of getting understood by a large and rather careless audience of readers just where the journalist had violated any code by using Seaforth's material in his turn. The author who attempts to instruct his public in suchlike fine distinctions of professionalism would much better put in the time writing another story.

I think that from the first, with my sympathies all on Seaforth's side, I had a glimmer of the lie of that trail through Kellerman's mind. Even Kurtz Syndicate men are not wholly without what passes for a professional dead line, which I could, in this case, imagine to be marked only by the conviction in Kellerman's mind that Seaforth's story was a matter of familiar kind with his. I had spent two months in the region in which Kellerman was supposed to have captured Muckamuck as a cub, and I suspected him of yarning throughout. Nothing of this came to the surface of our talk, however, as Seaforth and I got down to the street at last and drifted along its hot emptiness toward the drug store — where, amid stationery and sachet powder, a few books were sold — to find a copy of "The Bears of Quamash" which Seaforth could autograph for me.

The next day he went north to finish his lecture tour, and I put in at the gap between Temblor and Tejon where I had business about sheep. Then I loaned my copy to Jerke Johnson who was riding fence on the San Emigdio.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jerke handed it back in a day or two with the verdict that it was "mighty interestin' readin'"!

"But true, Jerke! Does it sound true?"

Jerke was of the opinion that a lot of things were probably true that didn't in the least sound so. "Sort of reminds me", he dropped, "of the pieces Al Kellerman used to write for his paper when he was a-ketchin' that bear for Kurtz."

"Jerke! Were you in on *that!*" He had been, I knew, at the centre of all sorts of enviable occasions, but this was the first I had heard of Muckamuck. Under much persuasion the story dribbled as negligently as cigarette smoke from Jerke Johnson's lips.

Kellerman, it seemed, after two weeks of unsuccessful beating in the San Gabriel, had attached to himself a bear tracker of repute, one Doc Shaffer, who had guided him to the 3A ranch at which Jerke was provisionally employed as bronco buster. It was a slack time at the 3A and "the boys" took to Kellerman "like", as Jerke figured it, "he was pie and doughnuts". No bear appeared. But "signs", which in this case took the form of footprints round the spring and in the soft earth along the shallows of Salt Creek, were plentiful. In the intervals of fruitlessly following them, the journalist sat in at the ranch games and prepared his due instalments of copy.

"After he had seen our poker play," Jerke admitted, "which sure was pretty, we wa'n't near so anxious for bear as we had been in the first place."

After that Kellerman's daily practice was to go out with Doc Shaffer and have a look at and a snapshot of the newest tracks, to set a "coupla Mex's" to trail them, and after getting off his allotment of hairbreadth escapes and death struggles with bear, to devote the rest of the day to the real business of draw poker.

"After he'd been there a week", Jerke at last gave the tale its way with him, "we wasn't carin' if he didn't find no bear that season. It was plum lonesome on Salt Crick, and the Kurtz checks which he paid his poker losses with, was as good as money.

"We done our best by him," said Jerke, "holdin' down on the liquor and pumpin' up his hopes of bear every time the 'Messenger' began to get restive.

"Everything was mighty pleasant and sociable for a matter of three weeks or so, and then Kellerman began to get letters from the office intimatin' that Kurtz wasn't near so anxious for bear as he had been. Kellerman would be plum discouraged over these here missives, and allow he'd ought to move over to Castac where he'd hear the bear wasn't so shy and pernickety. But it looked like the Salt Crick bears was keeping tab on his hopes and prospects, for no sooner would he give Shaffer notice to pack the outfit, than there would be a regular breakin' out of bears' tracks around the water holes and acrost the mud flats where the crick ran when there was any. Then Kellerman would get out and rustle up another bunch of exciting incident for the 'Messenger'. Finally, just about the time Kellerman was gettin' the run of our poker play, come a letter saying:

"'Kurtz doesn't want any bear. Better come home.'

"We left off goin' for the mail after that for most a week, seein' how it discouraged Kellerman, until Jessup, the cattle boss, had to go over to the station to see about some steers he was shippin', and come back with a telegram which scattered our hopes promiscuous.

"'No more checks will be honored. Come home.'

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*"It don't seem natural for a half grown grizzly to eat out of your hand"*



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"That kind of got Kellerman where he lived, for it seems this was the first time he'd ever been sent for a thing without gettin' it. They was a Castac man settin' in with us on the game and had got sort of familiar with the situation. Says he, sort of lookin' down his nose like: 'They is a coupla Mexicans back in the mountains here, got a sure enough charm for bear.'

"'Oh, I say, this is serious', says Kellerman, and we all looks reproachful at the Castac man, thinkin' it was a pretty poor play at this juncture. But our foreman had met this here Castac guy before.

"'You mean them two Greasers over to Whisky Flat?' says he.

"'The same', says Castac.

"'And you think they could get a bear for Mr. Kellerman?'

"'If they was paid for it.'

"The foreman looked at Kellerman and then at the telegram.

"'Your credit's good until you get this?' he inquires.

"'If it's a sure enough bear it's good in any case', says Kellerman, beginnin' to draw breath.

"The foreman puts the telegram back in the envelope and seals it up. "'You left for Whisky Flat this morning', he says, 'and I ain't a-goin' to deliver this till you come back, which will be in three days. I've noticed, says he, 'if you give anything three days, it generally comes around right!'

"Well, that was a sure fire prophecy, for along in the third day back they come, Kellerman and Doc Shaffer, a two year old grizzly at the end of a hair rope, and a story of how they captured him that sounded some like this one of your friend's, only more excitin'.

"It was readin' your friend's book set me rememberin'. They took him to the station, crated, in our chuck wagon, which they had borrowed express. Only it don't seem no ways natural for a half grown grizzly to eat out of your hand and answer to the name of Pedro, which is Mexican for Pete, in three days and a half. Howsomever, Doc Shaffer said it was the effect of the charm, and drinks and checks was flowin' free and plenty again, which was the main consideration."

"But you don't mean to say —" I expostulated.

"It was a charm all right", said Jerke, "but it didn't work steady. Long about three weeks after Kellerman had gone back to the city and we was gettin' over missin' him, the two Mexicans came over to Salt Crick on the rampage, lettin' out that it was a pet bear they'd raised from a cub and sold to Kellerman for three hundred dollars, half down and half when he got back to the city, and the half wasn't forthcomin'.

"They got our foreman to take it up for them but nothin' ever come of it.

"I don't know exactly what was the rights of it — Mexicans mostly lies, in my notion — but Doc Shaffer stood in with them. He was to have had ten per cent on the profits for puttin' them on to Kellerman, and mourned copious for what he didn't get. It was while his grief was a-workin' on him that he sort of dropped that them tracks which kept Kellerman in this part of the country was made by him with malice and pretense, as the lawyers puts it. The same bein' a bear's foot which he had cut out of redwood bark, which is shaggy like, and gets up before daylight to plant around in the damp earth where it would do the most good. Which goes to show", Jerke concluded, "that this here nature fakin' you read about ain't altogether a lit'rary game."

"But Kellerman's reports, the cap-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ture, the hairbreadth escapes —" I protested.

"Oh, *them!* He got them out of a book, aided and abetted by us boys, to the extent of our ability, an honest to goodness book, 'Adventures of Samuel Adams, Bear Trapper'. Djever hear of it?"

I had. Also I was to hear of it again in the most unexpected manner. Just then I was occupied with making up my mind whether or not to write the whole story to Seaforth as I had heard it.

I was still debating a year later when I put in at the house of my friend, the Historian, to find him still pushing his thin hand, which age had refined, over endless pages of minute notes that only under the glass revealed their marvelous clear roundness. Never sure that I had his attention, I gave him the count of my year's wanderings, and, strung between Noriega's shearing and certain verifications of early Spanish map making, the crossing of my trail with Seaforth's.

The name aroused him. The historic method, he insisted, was debased by such intransigent uses . . . nature faking. . . . Plainly he was on the side of the Most Distinguished Citizen.

"Still, I don't know but I owe them something. . . ." The domed historian's head with the spreading aureole of hair and beard turned from me as he rummaged the shelves behind. "Among them they've talked my book to the surface again . . . it is to be republished with illustrations. After more than fifty years." He laid the thick brown volume before me. "'Adventures of Samuel Capen Adams', the best bear book in America, if I did write it —"

The best, as I know it, the incomparable book of bears. The Historian turned it over in his beautiful old hands. "Perhaps I do owe something to the nature fa — fictionists. Fifty years! Maybe in a hundred somebody will take an interest in my history. . . . After all . . . no genuine book is ever really lost. . . . We may take this as evidence, mayn't we?"

"Never lost." I agreed with him. But what I should like to know — in the general distribution of credits, what share falls to Kurtz and Kellerman?

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THE SKETCH BOOK

## NEW HANDBAGS FOR OLD

By Will Cuppy

SOME of my friends are very fond of my opinions, around Christmas time. At this season they listen willingly, even eagerly, to anything I may have to impart about holiday gifts. They go so far as to seek me out and ask my advice on the subject. Their really touching dependence upon my judgment in the month of December would flatter me more if I did not suspect that they are too busy to concentrate and are, as the saying goes, passing the buck.

Perhaps I have put the case too strongly. It isn't as if every one of my acquaintances rang me up and begged my invaluable advice before making the slightest move toward a Yuletide budget. Some of them, I have no doubt, ring up somebody else. The rest I readily forgive. They, my faithful Christmas followers, have probably decided, after mature deliberation, that since I observe no regular office hours I must have little, if anything, else to do but to supply them with lists of suitable (and not too expensive) presents for their more or less loved ones.

And of course I am glad to help out, within reason, although these last minute calls for help do cut into one's own private troubles. I do not precisely dread — yes, to be perfectly honest, I do distinctly dread — the impending annual telephone call from my cousin Anne informing me that she hasn't the faintest notion what to give to a priceless old school friend of her mother's who lives in Rye but may be abroad again this year as she is still as lively as anything and whenever she feels like traveling just ups and travels. Anne herself hardly knows her — indeed, she has seen her only once, years ago — but in some peculiar fashion she has got the idea of this old lady connected with the idea of Christmas. And I am expected to do something about it.

Now I have long since exhausted all my notions of what to send this lively old lady of Rye (assuming that the description still fits her, for she may have settled down or moved permanently away). Her tastes may have changed completely, not that Anne or I ever knew what they were in the first place. Since it is quite probable that all these years we have been sending her things that she couldn't abide, I sometimes think as the inevitable telephone call approaches, "What's the use of it all?" I intend to take a firm stand this year and tell Anne of these doubts, but then again I may weaken.

After all, the old lady is more mine than Anne's. She never seems to enter Anne's foreconscious until Christmas Eve is well upon us, and she fades out, I am convinced, quite as suddenly. On the other hand, it is not too much to say that she constitutes one of my major problems. Although I have never seen her, I have dreamed of her, let the doctors say what they will. I have started out of a sound sleep with the nightmare knowledge that I should have to think up something for her again, and yet again, down the years. Upon occasion she has seemed to me to be the proper subject for the pen of



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a Dante at his most Dantesque rather than for the gentler musings of a Christmas essayist. And yet I wish her well, whether she has remained at Rye this year or gone abroad. In the latter case I trust sincerely that wind and wave may bring her safely home again. Moreover, I think that, considering everything, this sentiment does me credit. Should a regrettable casualty occur upon one of her trips, I shall have the comfort of feeling that it happened through no malicious animal magnetism of mine.

By the way, though, I must tell Anne not to send the old lady any more handbags. It just occurs to me that we have overdone the handbags a little. Several times, at a conservative estimate, when Anne's question has caught me desperately unprepared, I have answered jauntily, "Send her a handbag!" It is so fatally easy to say, "Send her a handbag!" Anne has always been so delighted with the suggestion that I couldn't bear to remind her of the handbags that had gone before. I might seek to defend myself on the ground that I always hoped that the last handbag had worn out before the next one came, so that the new one would fill a longfelt want. I might try to reason that some use can always be found for some handbags. No amount of dialectic, however, can dispose of the grim fact that the old lady must by now have heaps of handbags, for the ownership of which she can offer no reasonable excuse to inquiring neighbors. This must be, in a way, embarrassing.

She may, for that matter, not want even one handbag, let alone dozens. She may think that handbags are a useless luxury, or a menace to society, or a sign of the moral laxity of the times, or the result of the war or of the younger generation or something. She may carry only a small purse in her pocket with her peppermints. In that case the almost continuous procession of handbags which Anne and I have directed from Fifth Avenue (well, maybe not always Fifth) to Rye has been a tragic blunder from the very first.

If, on the other hand, she does use handbags, in moderation, Anne should have been more careful in selecting the consignments, instead of entrusting the purchase to the children. One of my relatives was so fastidious about handbags that she not only insisted upon choosing her own, but always returned those sent her at Christmas, together with a polite rejection slip stating that she did not find the article available at the moment but would be glad to consider other examples of the donor's Christmas spirit in the future. No doubt she went to extremes. I only mention this idiosyncrasy of hers for what it may be worth. It is thrown out as a mere hint and foretaste of what Christmas may in time become.

This relative declared to the end of her days, "A woman is known by her handbag!" Herself she preferred the large, loose kind of somewhat indeterminate outlines and indefinite though considerable capacity. Her handbag always approached if it did not actually overstep the delicate line which may be thought to differentiate the roomier sort of stocking or household mending receptacle from the ordinary handbag of commerce, strictly so called. She liked to feel that if she took a fancy to a head of lettuce or a particular squash at the corner store — and she was the kind of woman who would take a fancy to a particular squash — she knew of a good place to put it. With her handbag at her side she always gave me the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

impression that in case of fire she would be able to make a quick and profitable getaway, taking with her most of the family heirlooms and whatever else she might decide upon among the smaller articles of household furniture.

My relative was really a wonderful woman. Handbags were her one weakness. Practically, her career seems to leave me about where I was in regard to Anne's old lady. We simply must think of something else this year. But what? What? At any rate, the priceless old girl shall not lack a present to brighten her eye on Christmas morning. Not if I can help it. Not while there are handbags.

## YEAST IN HOLLYWOOD

By Ralph Block

IT remains as difficult as ever to view so large a capitalistic enterprise as the motion picture in America as an art. Its purposes in the gross are now so much more governed by the principles of crowd supply and demand than they were in the days of hit and miss picture making. There was at that time only here and there a penetrative plunge into the rich bonanza pockets of quick public attention. Now technical stabilization in the studios, and efficiency in charting public hunger in the business office, have come hand in hand, and with them an extreme conventionalization of product. Yet it must be admitted that where the standard of superiority is even only that of the type, there are bound to be individual imaginative factors at work in so large a field as the motion picture arena has become, individual factors which are always in process of establishing new and better standards for the whole level.

To this extent the American movie has witnessed a revolution in the last few years. The type has reached a point in technical proficiency and taste that seemed impossible of achievement a few years ago. In addition, a few directors have emerged, such as Chaplin, Lubitsch, and Cruze, who have rebelled against the mass tyranny of the audience, and have brought the point of view of a civilized minority to bear upon their treatment of material.

Undoubtedly the processes of progress toward this new viewpoint have not been as conscious as they might appear in any subsequent analysis. Nevertheless, it has been a clearly defined evolution, bringing in its wake new responsibilities for its originators. In order to project an attitude varying so sharply from the formulized dramatic folklore of the old movie audience, it was found necessary to sharpen the instruments of expression, good enough at dulness for the old task, but unfitted for the new. The instruments of the director's craft are (1) the actor, (2) the actor, and (3) the actor. Number one is the human actor; number two, the background as actor; and number three, the actor in the director's own brain. The camera, which for years had been a constant factor, required little renewed attention in the evolution of the moment. The camera had already been brought to a capacity of performance, surpassing the ability of most directors and actors to make use of it. Indeed at times it had led directors into blind alleys, as it led one well known director a few years ago to decide that a motion picture should travel as the line of vision travels — ergo, a movie should panoram every single route traveled by the eye in its possible journey over

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

any possible episode. The result was thousands of feet of film of unselected reality, not the massive and penetrating detail of the later Joyce but mere expanse of space. After a brief experiment, the experimenter suddenly remembered that art is selection, and dismissed the Akeley camera for a while. Doubtless many directors will be overcome for a time by the magic of the gyroscopic camera used in the German-made "Last Laugh", before they will return to an understanding that in the last essential one brain weighs more than two cameras, so far as movies are concerned.

It became necessary for the impatient director searching for a new artistic experience to train the average actor in a new, more delicately shaded kind of pantomime. More would have to be said with less in the saying of it. Also new things, not yet said on the screen, would have to be stated. The same rule applied to the active background. It too would have to say more with less expenditure of effort in the saying of it. In other words, selection, accentuation, signification. The actor in the director's brain had already traveled half the way before he arrived at these decisions. But one more step was needed. The film should not journey over so much space to say what it had to say. In other words, the director should take his audience from one place to another place — or time — with confidence that the audience would understand the transition without literal explanation of it. In the studios, this was called close cutting, short cutting, fast cutting, depending on the studio in which the term was used.

All these ideas worked themselves out in various places, in various ways and at different times. The result is that one or two per cent of the seven hundred motion pictures made annually in the United States are now characterized by a new sense of actuality, by an assumption that life doesn't necessarily go according to the rules, by disregard for the Victorian mechanics of plot, by an increased understanding of the power of the actor to express the nuances of character in the movements of the face and the body, and by a new realization of what the forms and spaces of scenic background contribute to the cause of beauty.

Strangely enough, the new director has missed one opportunity, and the responsibility is still on him by the excellence of his progress to add one more achievement before he can go on to deepen further the art he is in the act of creating in so pragmatic an atmosphere. It still remains true that the movie is an expression of the art of motion. As such, every part of the movie is theoretically a living part of a living organism. But in no art are the reasons for omissions so valid and so closely related to practical problems as in the motion picture. The director took a step forward with the new cutting, but his gain was also a loss. In some cases he was unable to visualize the new eliminations, the new brevity, before shooting his picture, and made the eliminations afterward, thereby disturbing the emotional, organic balance of his completed picture. Nevertheless, the disturbance amounted to little because few directors have ever realized that such an equilibrium existed. And what they did not consciously have nor consciously try to acquire they could scarcely be accused of losing.

It does now, however, devolve upon the director to realize that his motion picture is an organic matter, not a collection of shots strung upon a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plot which he has mapped out in a constructed "continuity" beforehand. Once again, practical considerations count for artistic validities. Business offices are demanding that directors know exactly what scenes they will shoot, what actors they will use, and how much money they will spend, before touching a finger to a camera. This state of affairs may prove a liability if it is pushed to the point of producing a cut and dried routine of photography. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to suppose that an intelligent and imaginative and disciplined director may, by sufficient self projection, create in his own mind and on paper, with the help of his writing assistants, a fairly correct graph of what he means to create before he starts to chisel the stone. He will be especially anxious to approach exactitude in such a task when once he realizes that an imperishable art has a rhythm and a coherence which is one of its chief reasons for existing as art.

The movie director's job in this respect is harder than that of any other creator. The novelist, the sculptor, the painter, the dramatist, and the composer may all rub out what they have done, begin anew, and make the old conform and relate to the new if the basic design remains. The camera is no less flexible, but the process is costly. Chaplin is credited by legend with having reshot "A Woman of Paris" four times. The less exacting creator will take his chances of ameliorating his faults in the cutting room with shears and a few "transition" titles. The result will always be the artistically unsatisfactory state of most commercial movies. There have been directors in the past who have "shot" from a cast iron manuscript, without deviation; but the unimaginative pursuit of such a course will not necessarily produce a fine unit. Much depends on the architect.

It is difficult to remain away from the analogy of music in contemplating the movie. Both are a progression in space-time before a human sense, and both are subject to the same laws of rhythm, tempo, accent, and are bound as one between a beginning and an end. To demonstrate the operation of these principles on the motion picture screen requires a no less intensive grasp of the materials involved — human, mechanical, spiritual and æsthetic — than is needed for the creation of a great symphony. It is the abstract factors, powerful in their implication, which still remain to be utilized to their full force in the American movie.

## AS TO THE NOVEL

By Grant Overton

GEORGE MEREDITH would say that the only progress made by the novel in the last half century was in the women it offers. Hardy subtitled "Tess" with the words, "A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented". Flaubert evidently thought it unnecessary to subtitle "Madame Bovary". The juster transcription of women is, indeed, the chief end of the writing man. Does this sound mathematical? Mathematics can inspire emotion. A curve is equally an equation and a sensation of profound beauty.

Rereading Joseph Conrad's "Nostromo" and "Chance", one is not satisfied that the women constitute our only advance. The splendid sacrifice of chronology in "Nostromo", the once — and twice — removed narrative method of "Chance" — these are

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as distinctly gains for the novel as counterpoint was a gain for music.

The art of mystery tales shows a general retrogression. We habitually have offered to us a tale with a single feeble mystery element, the solution of which can from the first be more than half guessed. A novel of mystery is anæmic if it does not contain at least three separate puzzles so combined as to be interdependent. The dénouement of any one, however, must not betray, must rather further complicate, the problems offered by the others.

The elimination of external action is easily and frequently carried too far. It must always be remembered that in one or more external acts lies the only acceptable proof of the reality of depicted states of mind. For the novelist to assume his conceded omniscience-of-the-story-teller is all very well; he may then go as deeply as he likes; at the end, action — something said, something done — must furnish the evidence from which all that has gone before is plausibly deducible.

Among innumerable other classifications, it is easy to distinguish three stages in the modern novel. In the first, the effort was confined to the representation of little traits and peculiarities that set certain persons off from other people, and from each other; the amusing or touching things about them; and the novelist was satisfied to combine his persons in some sort of story or arrangement of happenings — the "plot" — which, by itself, was seldom of much account. This was largely the case with Dickens.

In the second stage, the novelist tried to go deeper into the behavior of his people. He said to himself: "I wonder why they act as they do?" He was not answered by the words "trait" or "peculiarity". He found his answer in such explanations as heredity or environment.

The trouble with these two explanations has been their failure to explain. For every case that looks like heredity, we have always been able to point to another instance where heredity proves nothing at all, doesn't fit the facts at all. We have the same trouble with outward circumstances, "environment". If we can point to one man who seems to have been shaped by the conditions of his early life, there's always another man right across the street who has triumphed over the same obstacles, or even worse ones. . . .

So we ended on a note of utter perplexity. What *is* heredity; and how much of a factor is "environment"? And after a while we began to suspect that perhaps neither was so important as we had supposed. About the time this suspicion became overpowering, the emphasis of scientific discovery was transferred from the field of heredity to the field of the subconscious mind.

Psychoanalysis was heard of, and we saw that here might lie a third explanation of the deep causes of behavior, an explanation far more important and *far more capable of exact determination* than either heredity or environment have so far proved. Novelists had already begun the study of the mind from infancy onward through manhood and to old age. How many recent novels have begun with the boy's or girl's childhood!

The findings of psychoanalysis, however, introduce a fourth dimension into novel writing — a dimension in which, if we are wise, we shall move warily at present. They give us access to more than the mind of the child, to the buried mind of the full grown man or woman. . . . With their aid, we incept the third stage of the modern

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

novel — an effort to go deep into behavior and yet keep on firm ground.

Furthermore, the conviction comes over us that now at last we are going about our search in the right way. We are trying to find out how much of behavior is purely the man or woman himself or herself, conscious and unconscious. If, then, at the last, we find behavior that we still cannot account for, we can possibly relate it to heredity on the one hand and consider the factor of environment on the other; and perhaps we can thus by elimination find just how much of behavior is due to factors *outside* our person-subject.

There will be no such difficulty in this matter as in the matter of neglected external action. Conscious thought may be and often is successfully repressed from word or deed — though when so it is not and cannot be the legitimate material of fiction. Unconscious processes are never successfully repressed; buried they resurrect themselves; and though they may never intrude into the conscious mind, they inevitably extrude into the field of speech or action, or both. The modern novelist, therefore, who knows how to handle his psychoanalytic apparatus will never lack his Q. E. D.

## THACKERAY AND CURRER BELL

By Arthur Bartlett Maurice

SINCE I hold myself to be a sound Thackerayan, the discovery of a new anecdote about Thackeray stirs conflicting emotions. I am at once pleased by the discovery and annoyed and humiliated at the thought that I have not known the story before. That is the trouble with fanatics on any subject.

A new (to me) Thackeray anecdote came to light the other day in a paper covered pamphlet, one of the many of its kind that were published in London about 1860 as aftermath of Harriet Beecher Stowe's scandalous, ill advised, though perhaps well meant article on the relations of Byron and Lady Byron.

For the full significance of the anecdote it is necessary to recall the circumstances of the publication of Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre". In its first edition the novel was presented as the work of Currer Bell. It was dedicated to Thackeray, whose "Vanity Fair" had recently burst upon the world, as "the first social regenerator of his day". The dedication hotly assailed those reviewers who had compared Thackeray with Fielding and referred to the comparison as that of an eagle with a vulture, the eagle of course being Thackeray.

Nobody then knew who Currer Bell was, and Thackeray himself did not meet her until some time later. Yet the curious story went the rounds of the clubs and dinner tables of London that Thackeray had pilloried Currer Bell in his portrait of Becky Sharp in "Vanity Fair"; and that she in revenge had written "Jane Eyre" for the sole purpose of picturing Thackeray as the Edward Rochester of the story. Ridiculous as the *canard* was, the fact remains that there was a marked resemblance between the tragedy of Thackeray's married life and that of Rochester.

A decade later the story was recalled in the pamphlet about the Byron case for the purpose of scoring a point against American feminine impertinence. The setting is a London dinner table where Mr. Thackeray is the guest

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of honor. An American woman is seated next to him.

Fair American Visitor: "Tell me, Mr. Thackeray, is it true, the dreadful story about you and Currer Bell?"

Thackeray: "Alas, Madam, it is all too true. And the fruits of that unhallowed intimacy were six children. I slew them all with my own hand."

## STRANGER THAN FICTION

By L. G.

THERE seems to be a pathetic futility about success, any kind of success, the big and the little, that after the first drunken flush of triumph brings with it a sense of frustration very like failure. Yet such disillusionment prevails not only among commercial men who, having won their fight, are often discontented with their trophies — for dollars are but a form of medals which the world awards those who have done a certain kind of thing better than it is done by others — but among artists, writers, scholars, frequently envied as persons who have attained the happier way of working.

I suppose there is no man who has not at times found fault with his occupation. Kings have bemoaned the crown's weight, princes of song usually have moods of lament, prophets grow weary of visions; and those who do what is called creative work often feel exasperated at the dead weight of paint, of stone, of words. Such lifeless things draw life only from those who breathe upon them, just as in the beginning when God breathed upon the moistened dust that became man. The godlike gift of art is almost as rare as other miracles, such as raise the dead. It is dead things with which an artist must work, and exasperation at his medium is merely an inverse form of self reproach, an evasive acknowledgment of weakness.

My accomplishments as a writer are scarcely of a quality to be called successful, though publishers have done much to make it appear otherwise. I have reached the outer edge of middle age, have written many novels; and nothing that I have written, or can write, approaches the stories that I know intimately to be true, stories in which I have had much the same part as those Elizabethan spectators who were privileged to have their stools upon the stage, thus being very near the characters though taking no part in the play.

The wonder is not that we who use fiction exaggerate; it is astonishing that even the more audacious, the most sincere and painstaking, seem barely to touch the hem of truth. The technique of what is today a convincing manner has been conventionalized; just as much so in our day as in the days of the earliest novelists who seem to us rather artificial, whatever their virtues. At best realism is no nearer reality than the photograph to the living man. Today almost every novelist writes well, understands plot, character drawing and development, suspense; some show haste, others laborious effort, some an affected ease, others a whimsy impertinence, many an intensity of feeling that is rarely pleasing to the public; and nearly all novels, particularly the realistic, seem to be mere word paintings — and amazingly well done.

Some appraise a novel's value by the degree in which reading and remembering it has seemed to convey a sense of personal experience. Others must feel that this is as inaccurate a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

form of appraisal as any — personal pleasure and varying degrees of susceptibility keep many persons from thinking alike about any form of art. Yet, whether the novel be a tale of fantasy or one of the mere commonplace, the "grip" which holds the reader must somehow be related to the personal experience theory. And even the strongest "grip" of fiction's characters is not strong beside what one sees and hears among the living. However, that may be true only for those who look at life with the eyes of a writer. Perhaps most of those who read must have their neighbors put into a book to understand them, needing the novelist's guidance in perceiving the drama of a thwarted life, the tragedy in a commonplace happening. Perhaps people read books as they do because they fail to appreciate their privilege of peering directly over the Recording Angel's shoulder as he writes; and truth does not seem invitingly strange to them until it is guised as fiction. Yet God is the great dramatist.

This which follows is true; it has all the elements that a novelist, choosing this particular type of story, needs. I have often tried to write it but cannot, except thus as a mere flimsy sketch.

It is about a friend I knew more intimately than I have known any other man. The war killed him, though he came out unwounded after having entered long before America put the trumpet to her lips. He neither wanted excitement nor had feeling against Germany, but a part of his education had been received in England and he loved England, English traditions and people. He was a painter, a man of scholarship and refinement, yet drove a truck before camouflage became a science.

Between battles he married a woman, robust as Juno and rather beautiful. He came through the war unwounded but shattered; and the war had so affected his affairs that there remained to him hardly a tithe of the moderate income upon which he had depended that he might paint as he pleased.

Going where he was unknown, he devoted a part of his time to painting furniture, that his small income might be enlarged. The pieces which he decorated were sent to him, delivered by a young truck driver. My friend's wife looked upon this truck driver with favor, and concealed her infatuation from no one, or at least appeared to make hardly a gesture of concealment. Perhaps she knew that her husband was incapable of suspecting her of an unworthy interest in one so far beneath her. Whatever it was, luck gave him blindness. When not decorating furniture he worked at his canvas as if an Egyptian were standing over him with a lash, yet he seldom signed a picture, and of those signed rarely offered one for exhibition.

He died of starvation. There was plenty of food at hand but his body simply refused to assimilate what he ate; he died as nearly a skeleton as a famine sufferer, and the starvation brought to him much the same kind of fantasies as come to those who brood and fast. These visions, with the last of his strength, he put to paper.

In the chapel where the funeral was held there were but four persons who had known my friend. The widow was there; the truck driver, in a grey suit that wanted pressing, sat by her; and he drove her rented motor car as it followed the hearse to the cemetery.

Such is the story that God wrote, or the devil, before my eyes. If I had imagined it, I could write it; but having seen it live I am helpless.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*From "Another Book of Verses"*

# CHRISTMAS CARGOES BY REINDEER, LTD.

## By Marcia Dalphin

*Going up with music*
*On cold starry nights,*
*To sup with the Queen*
*Of the gay Northern Lights.*

WINTER *was* winter up there in Quebec. Cold going through you like a knife, yet perfectly aboveboard, pleasant and smiling about it, no nonsense of mists and damp, and chill east winds. And the nights! Blue-black skies with the aurora leaping and quivering and streaking up its long pale fingers; stars that had edges, like swords—Vega, Arcturus, Sirius, glittering and throbbing as though they would tear holes in heaven. And under it all field after field of untrodden snow, broken here and there by twisty rail fences and little triangles of woods, black against the white. That is all there was to those Canadian nights; snow, stars, sky. Yes, and there was silence, just as intense in its quality as the other things, a silence you could hear.

And Christmas was Christmas there too, the holiday of the old English picture books. There were the big family gatherings to which all men who worked on the great farm were invited, with long tables, and the annual glass of wine at each plate: dances at night with the fiddler "calling off": children's parties and forfeits: long sleigh rides behind teams gay with bells: and slid-

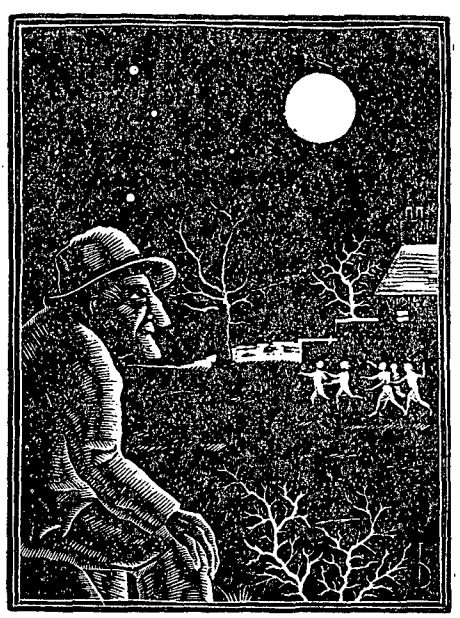


PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing on the ice, just like Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Winkle at Dingley Dell.

It must have been on the morning of one of those long ago frosty Christmas days that a small girl hopped out of bed before daylight and found "Alice in Wonderland" in her stocking. She sat down right after breakfast and read it through from cover to cover. From then on, down deep in her mind, Christmas and snow and stars and Northern Lights and books were always to be linked together.

The aurora does not often tremble in these more southerly skies; but soon now on cold, bright December nights the snow will lie white along our little village street, candles will shine in the windows of the houses, the Library that fronts on the Green and backs on the Brook will be trimmed with laurel and pine and holly, and firelight will flicker on the wreaths in its windows: carols will ring in the church towers, children will be gluing their noses to the windows of the toyshop, and we shall all be looking for the Christmas books — those books which are not quite like any others, and which must be hidden away in all sorts of mysterious, secret places until the great day comes.



*From "Broomsticks"*

Books *are* the most romantic thing to put in stockings, not a doubt of it. Every year one wonders how there can possibly be anything new and thrilling for the children's bookshelves, and every year the publishers come riding up behind their reindeer at the last minute, pink with excitement, and pull something out of their packs.

In the October BOOKMAN a glimpse was given us of treasures to come: "The Flying Carpet", "A Gallery of Children", "The Fat of the Cat", "Sweet Times and the Blue Policeman", the gorgeous new "Pinocchio". Christmas toys began to come into books too, for "Poor Cecco" led forth a whole cupboardful, and "The Little Wooden Doll" fell out of her attic window just in time to join the procession. And now the packs are being opened again. Hold your breath!

"And to everyone she gave not one bun, not one orange, but a *bag* of oranges and a *bag* of buns. And not merely a bag of ordinary Denia oranges and ordinary currant buns, but a bag of Jaffas and a bag of Bath."

This exactly expresses the way we feel about "Broomsticks", Walter de la Mare's new book of children's stories, just out in time for Christmas. Not only does he give us "Pigtails, Ltd." and "Broomsticks", either one enough for a substantial Christmas feast, but with both generous hands he fills the measure up and runs our cup over with "The Lovely Myfanwy", "Maria-Fly", "The Dutch Cheese", "Lucy", and half a dozen other tales of enchantment and beauty such as he, and he alone, can write.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The essential quality of this author unites all these stories, and yet they are as diverse as you can imagine. There is the rich Thief who "desired to be safe and comfortable and respectable and beloved"; there is Maria who "sawn" a fly, and finds it so hard to communicate the result of her discoveries to an understanding ear; in "The Dutch Cheese" John sits sour and glum in his cottage and tries to keep the fairies and his sister apart. The haunting legend of the chimney sweeps, "The Three Sleeping Boys of Warwickshire", who were ill treated by their master and whose dream shapes left their sleeping bodies at night to play with the other children in the green water meadows, is perhaps the loveliest thing in the book. "Broomsticks" will be a rare, rare treat for families that read aloud at night around the Christmas fire.

The reindeer will toss their heads and shake their bells when the pack opens and discloses "Playtime and Company" and "Another Book of Verses for Children", for they know their author of old. It is a long time since E. V. Lucas joined the circle at holiday time, and those who have known and loved "A Book of Verses for Children", "Anne's Terrible Good Nature", and "The Slowcoach", that fascinating story of a whole family of children who traveled around England in a caravan, will be delighted to find that in "Playtime and Company" Mr. Lucas has collected the verses he has written for children, and that the inimitable Ernest Shepard has done scores and scores of delightful drawings for it. Mr. Lucas's children are very British. Their talk is of tuck and ices, of sweeps and poulterers, bullfinches and dormice. But Mr. Shepard's children, the picture children of "Playtime and Company" and "When We Were Very Young", have nothing so limiting as a native country, they are at home anywhere.

"Another Book of Verses for Children" is a reprint of a charming anthology which was suffered to go out of

*From "The Cuckoo Clock"*

print during the war. The arrangement of the poems, the titles for the subdivisions, the delightful head and tail pieces and decorative title page, make this one of the most attractive collections ever published. Some of Francis Bedford's illustrations for it are unforgetable. "Friends in the Village" and "The Country Round" breathe forth the very essence of rural England and child life out of doors.

After all, probably nothing that a grown up finds to put into a stocking pleases him so much as some old book that he loved as a child brought back from the oblivion of "out of print". Not only can he pass it on to his children, he may legitimately take sly peeps at it

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

himself. In a family that I know there is treasured a tattered old red book called "Fairy Tales from Brentano". When the grandfather of this family was literary editor on the New York "Times" years ago this book was sent over to him from England for review. He liked it so much that he brought it home to his children, and it has been literally loved to pieces, having been handed down from father to son for three generations now. There were two books of fairy tales written by Clemens Brentano, published in the early Eighties, and this new volume is a selection of stories from both. They are whimsical, extravagant tales, sometimes suggesting Stockton and sometimes "The Rose and the Ring".

This is really rather a good year for grown ups who treasure memories of old children's books, for there are two more well loved books in the pack. One is "The Cuckoo Clock and The Tapestry Room" in a new edition, delightful from any point of view, good to hold, paper and type just right, and with all the dear, familiar pictures by Walter Crane. Mrs. Molesworth is distinctly an author with a following. Her admirers may not be legion but they are never lukewarm. Who can ever forget Griselda, the lonely little girl who had no one to play with until the cuckoo took pity on her and came out of the clock to take her on wonderful journeys? A funny, dry tongued bird, the cuckoo was, with a Victorian attitude toward little girls, but he made a comforting companion nevertheless, and one of inexhaustible resource.

"King Penguin" is an entertaining story by Richard Henry Horne, the author of "Memoirs of a London Doll" and "The Good-Natured Bear". The tale of Percy Johnstone's shipwreck on an island inhabited solely by penguins, his base betrayal of the too confiding king of the penguins, his repentance, make most amusing reading, and the drawings by Jimmie Daugherty are done with a light touch and an evident delight in the text. There are other new books in this charming "Little Library" series — Alphonse Daudet's "The Pope's Mule", "Dame Wiggins of Lee", and "A Dog of Flanders" by Ouida.

A new book, a jolly one, comes bowing out of the pack in the best oriental manner. It is "Shen of the Sea", a book of Chinese tales by Arthur Bowie Chrisman. The stories are fresh, unhackneyed, full of humor, and distinction is lent to the book by the unusually clever silhouettes drawn for it by Else Hasselriis, the Danish artist. "Shen of the Sea" will be a boon to the story teller.

We have "summer people" in our village. When Bill and Bill's mother came in to see me one day this summer, saying they were on their way to visit the blacksmith, and I realized with horror that in my own neighborhood there was a smithy and that I knew nothing about it, I made haste to mend my ways. I found a typical smith, tall, fair, and herculean but, on that day, at least, more pensive than I had pictured the race. "No, ma'am, blacksmithing is not what it was. Six teams here and five teams in the next place is all I have now." He gazed reflectively into the forge fire. Too young to remember when Westchester knew not the meaning of such terms as "step on the gas" and "speed hound", when all her ways were ways of pleasantness and peace, and traffic sounds were confined to the thud of hoofs and the clank of harness, he yet, no doubt, comes of a long race of smiths, and has heard his grandfather bemoan the times on which we have fallen.

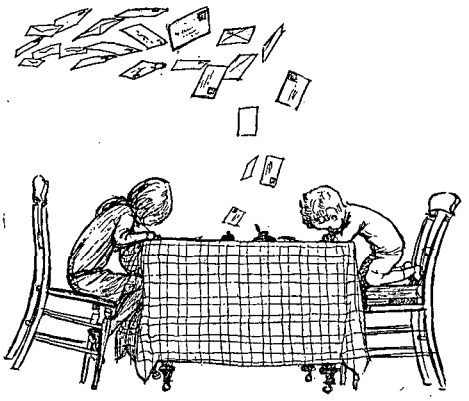
All this came back to me when my

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eyes fell on Padraic Colum's new book, "The Forge in the Forest", for here is a book with a fine stirring atmosphere in it, and the stroke of iron on iron. To a king shaping a sword on an anvil in the forest come four men, story tellers, who have caught and tamed a wild horse. He agrees to make horseshoes for them if they will tell two stories for each shoe he puts on, about the elements that go to the making of horseshoes — and the world: Fire, Water, Earth, and Air. The bargain is struck, the story teller is off. And we are the richer for spirited and poetic renderings of the stories of Phaethon, the Seven Sleepers, Bellerophon, and others less familiar. Boris Artzybasheff has made striking full page drawings, decorative initials, and end papers for the book, and the cover is unusually rich in color and design.

What are we going to find in our pack for older boys and girls this year? Stories of distinction are hard to come by, but Cornelia Meigs's "Rain on the Roof" has all the literary quality that we have learned to expect from this author, and is a good story as well. The scene is laid in a seaport town in New England. There is an element of mystery in it, and a villain, and there is also a particularly fascinating workshop where ship models are all about underfoot, in process of being built or painted or rigged, and stories at large are being told by the nice man who makes them. There are at least three excellent short stories told within the long story, one of mediæval times, one of Scotland in the days when Queen Mary was a little girl, and one of the Pilgrims at Plymouth.

"Silent Scot", by Constance Lindsay Skinner, is a story of Tennessee in Revolutionary times, written in a vivid style and with a power of characterization not often found in historical stories for boys. Against a genuinely felt pioneer background Andy McPhail, "the best scout on the border", stands out as a real person, and there are moments in his story, especially in his adventures with Ferguson, that quite take you by the



*From "Playtime and Company"*

throat. So, too, in the scene in the first chapter you positively hold your breath as you watch Washington ride out into a meadow and sit there motionless, then swing his horse round and ride away, while at your elbow the crack shot of the British army slowly raises his rifle, takes aim, and — does not fire. Faults of construction in the book, due no doubt to the fact that parts of it were first published as short stories, mar its success as a consecutive story, but it is well worth adding to the library of any history loving boy or girl.

There are some beautiful new editions of old favorites this year. Several years ago N. C. Wyeth illustrated "The Last of the Mohicans". Now we have to put beside it "The Deerslayer", for which he has done many full page pictures in color. Fenimore Cooper is coming into his own as far as illustrative work is concerned, for there is an interesting new edition also of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*From "Playtime and Company"*

"The Pilot", with pictures by Donald Teague. A moderate priced and attractive edition of "A Tale of Two Cities" is illustrated by Rowland Wheelwright. The new "Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea" with illustrations by W. J. Aylward is one of the best I have seen for general use, and Mead Schaeffer's pictures for the one volume "Les Misérables" are vivid and interesting.

There are still a few books left in the bottom of the pack—Christmasy looking ones too, that we mustn't miss. If you see a large, squareish, bright red book sticking up in a corner seize it, for it is almost sure to be Carveth Wells's "The Jungle Man", a book about animals with amusing text, and attractive pictures by Tony Sarg. Small boys will like this.

Looking just as much like the season, though in an entirely different style, is the new holiday edition of "When We Were Very Young", a larger book than the regular edition but with the same white cover with delicious, ridiculous little lambs and children gamboling all over it. A surprise awaits you when you open it, nothing less than a portrait of Christopher Robin himself as a frontispiece.

The reindeer's load is becoming lighter and lighter now. Other books may come out between the time this article is written and the holidays, but the last book I saw was neither pulled out nor handed out of the pack. It came out all by itself, *flying*, and it was called "The Three Owls: A Book about Children's Books", written and edited by Anne Carroll Moore. I remembered that this was said to be a book that helps people to decide what books to give children at any time of year, and as it flew by I caught a glimpse of a festive colored jacket with a picture of a weather vane on it, so I detained it by one wing for a minute and before it twitched away I saw the frontispiece —Lewis Carroll with George Macdonald's children! So here is "Alice"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at both the beginning and end of a Christmas book review, and what could be more appropriate?

---

Broomsticks, and Other Stories. By Walter de la Mare. Alfred A. Knopf.

Playtime and Company. Verses by E. V. Lucas. Illustrations by Ernest H. Shepard. George H. Doran Company.

Another Book of Verses for Children. Edited by E. V. Lucas. Illustrations by F. D. Bedford. The Macmillan Company.

Fairy Tales from Brentano. Told into English by Kate Freiligrath Kroeker. Pictured by F. Carruthers Gould. Frederick A. Stokes Company.

The Cuckoo Clock and The Tapestry Room. By Mrs. Molesworth. Illustrated by Walter Crane. The Macmillan Company.

King Penguin. A Legend of the South Seas. By Richard Henry Horne. Rediscovered and introduced by Frances Margaret Fox. Illustrated by Jimmie Daugherty. The Macmillan Company.

The Pope's Mule. By Alphonse Daudet. With pictures in color and line by Hérouard. The Macmillan Company.

Dame Wiggins of Lee and Her Seven Wonderful Cats. The Macmillan Company.

A Dog of Flanders. By Louise de la Ramée. The Macmillan Company.

Shen of the Sea. By Arthur Bowie Chrisman. Illustrated by Else Hasselriis. E. P. Dutton and Company.

The Forge in the Forest. By Padraic Colum. With pictures by Boris Artzybasheff. The Macmillan Company.

Rain on the Roof. By Cornelia Meigs. The Macmillan Company.

Silent Scot. By Constance Lindsay Skinner. The Macmillan Company.

The Deerslayer. By James Fenimore Cooper. With pictures by N. C. Wyeth. Charles Scribner's Sons.

The Pilot. By James Fenimore Cooper. Pictures by Donald Teague. Minton, Balch and Company.

A Tale of Two Cities. By Charles Dickens. Illustrated by Rowland Wheelwright. Dodd, Mead and Company.

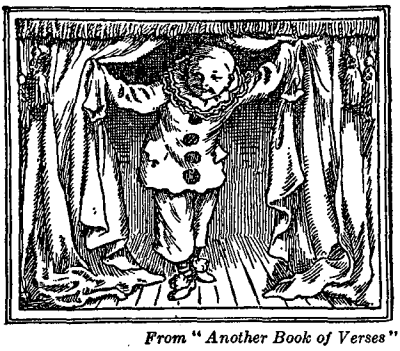
Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea. By Jules Verne. Illustrated by W. J. Aylward. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Les Misérables. By Victor Hugo. Illustrated by Mead Schaeffer. Dodd, Mead and Company.

The Jungle Man. By Carveth Wells. Illustrated by Tony Sarg. Duffield and Company.

When We Were Very Young. By A. A. Milne. Special Holiday edition. Illustrated by Ernest H. Shepard. E. P. Dutton and Company.

The Three Owls: A Book about Children's Books. By Anne Carroll Moore. The Macmillan Company.



*From "Another Book of Verses"*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THE LONDONER

*"Art and the Material"—A New Film Society—Dining with the Celebrated Dead—"The Informer"—Russian Books—The Letters of Manning to Lamb—Items.*

LONDON, *November* 1, 1925.

I WAS led by a leading article in "The Manchester Guardian" to procure a copy of Dr. S. Alexander's lecture called "Art and the Material", and I have read this with interest and attention. But on the whole I am disappointed with the Professor's conclusions, no doubt because I have not that pleasure in æsthetic discussion which seems to be common to all who are not actively engaged in producing contributions to the arts. For one thing, I can never understand the terms used by such logicians when they speak of works of art, and for another it never seems to me that any professor of æsthetics can get right down to the truth. We know that there is some impulse in mankind which leads men to produce or to try to produce works in which nature is imitated and given heightened significance. We know that such imitations arouse in the beholder a degree of emotion which the objects imitated have not the power to evoke. We know that as art progresses it ceases to be directly imitative, and attains a complexity quite beyond the capacity of primitive artists; and that from time to time æsthetes fall in love once more with the primitive and seek to rediscover it and even to go beyond it into the realm of dada and baba and gaga. But as to the nature of the æsthetic impulse, the precise meaning of the word "creation", and the method by which the artist's first conception is brought to a point at which the work created is recognizably a work of art, we know so many different things that we end by knowing nothing at all. Dr. Alexander knows a great many things, and he has unfortunately been able to discuss the question of creation with only two very young writers. Both of these young writers have told him "that in their best work they do not know beforehand what they mean to say, but one of them admits that sometimes the work is thought out consciously beforehand with much labour and never with so satisfactory a result". With these confessions in view, and with the results of his own judgment, Dr. Alexander comes to a conclusion which at first sight strikes me as being a false conclusion. I am not sure it is false, as I shall presently explain, but I still think it is false. This is the conclusion:

> I suggest that the artist's work proceeds not from a finished imaginative experience to which the work of art corresponds, but from passionate excitement about the subject matter; that the poet sings as the bird sings, because he must; that his poem is wrung from him by the subject which excites him, and that he possesses the imaginative experience embodied in his words just in so far as he has spoken them. In no sense is the poem the translation of his state of mind, for he does not know till he has said it, either what he wants to say or how he shall say it — two things which are admittedly one. The imaginative experience supposed to be in his mind does not exist there. What does exist is the subject matter which detains him and fixes his thoughts and feeds his interest, giving a colour to his excitement which would be different with a different subject matter. Excitement caused and detained by this subject, and at once enlarged, enlightened,



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and inflamed by insights into it bubbles over into words or the movements of the brush or burin or chisel.

That, in effect, is the purport of Dr. Alexander's whole lecture. Later, he says that the poet's creativeness "lies rather in his choice of language" (i.e., presumably, than in his conception). "The poet, like the sculptor, creates a form which owes its æsthetic character to his imputations, and hence can never be dissociated from his or the spectator's appreciation, so that beauty whether in nature or art, involves a coalescence of the material and the mind." Finally, "It is only through the public object of art, which all the world can see and hear, that the artist acquires that very private experience which is embodied in the work."

Now, for me, the objection to this theory which Dr. Alexander advances is that I find in it nothing which corresponds to my own experience. This is very likely because I am not an artist; but I should like to say that if Dr. Alexander had consulted men rather more experienced than his two young friends he probably would have found that the mature artist is upon more familiar terms with his genius than is the young experimenter. The young animal, although capable (none more so) of sporadic leapings, never comprehends design, and indeed is often apt to suppose that it does not exist. For this reason I feel that Dr. Alexander has not had the best advice. He may even, unintentionally, have suggested the reply which would best support his own thesis. Moreover, as far as I can see, the theory applies only to those works of art which are lyrical in character. In works of larger calibre, although inspiration at times may be incomplete, the essential quality of a work of art — its originality, its balance, or unity, or significance, or whatever one may like to call it — is infallibly there. (In this connection perhaps I may say that Roger Fry, who, more than any other man, has been responsible for the recent snobbery about æsthetic "form", is said to have admitted that by "form" he does not mean anything in space, but an intangible propriety which gives significance to the whole work.) It is quite true, I think, that the writer, for example, does not see every word of his book before he begins to write. But then he never sees the finished product. Dr. Alexander sees it, but the artist does not. I question, therefore, whether Dr. Alexander's theory is not vitiated by the fact that he regards a work of art wholly as that work which is seen by the non-creative beholder. The artist never sees the work as the beholder sees it. He sees it always as he has first dreamed it. For proof of this, Dr. Alexander may take the general incapacity of artists to judge their own work. But Dr. Alexander does not do this. He assumes that the finished work is in fact the work of art, which, of course, is a very reasonable thing to assume. His theory, however, leads him to assume further that no other work of art exists. He states that the artist does not know what he is doing, that he has a fine frenzy, seizes the pen or brush, and (in the manner of an epileptic) creates something the nature of which he has not previously ascertained. Here I think Dr. Alexander does injustice to that very impulse which it is his purpose to analyze. I think he is ingenious, but that he does not know much about the psychology of artists as I understand the term "artist". In the course of his lecture he quotes æsthetic theorists and philosophers; but he quotes only one artist, and for the purpose of contradicting him. I shall now retaliate. My own

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

view, held to the present, is very much the view of Lascelles Abercrombie, which Dr. Alexander seeks to controvert. It is, in substance, that the execution or setting forth in material form of that which already exists in his own vision is for the artist a bore. Further, that what is usually (by non-practitioners) called art is in general nothing but craftsmanship. I see no reason why craft should not be set high; but craft is never art. Art, for me, lies in the originality of the conception, and in the integrity of the imagination. It follows that by such standards much of what passes nowadays among the highbrows for art is not art at all, because the highbrow of today is apt to set conscious form above every other quality. In my view conscious form is so much pattern, and is pure craft. Professor Alexander guards himself against this view by some matter about technique, and quotes as support for his own view the fact that writers habitually make revisions in their work. I do not think this point is of moment, however, since all revision has as its object either a nearer approximation to the writer's original conception, or greater perfection of craftsmanship. The fact that original conceptions are modified in execution implies only that the original conception has given way before the demand of practicability — or the craftsman's sense of his own expressive limitations. The artist does not regard such modifications as improvements. In so far as they interfere with his ideal sense of the balance of his work they are a distress to him. I prefer to think of the finished article as an approximation. That for the non-creative person the finished article is the only kind of work of art which he apprehends, is neither here nor there. Dr. Alexander is not writing of æsthetics. He is posing the problem of the creative impulse and its nature. He does not know, nor can he conceive, the artist's vision. But he is well satisfied with what he gets (which the artist never is), because he knows no better. This is only a suggestion of mine. I am by no means done with Dr. Alexander's theory, which may be better than it now appears to me to be. But I think he has hold of a half truth. In other words, for all the appearance of logical exactitude which his lecture carries, I am disposed to feel that he shifts his ground in the course of it, and skips from the inspiration to the finished work and back again, without realizing that he has taken any such journey.

* * * *

There is a movement on foot in London to establish a sort of grand society for the æsthetically satisfying film. Good films from all over the world (but I fancy for the most part from Germany) are to be given little Sunday afternoon shows at the Tivoli. All those who believe in the possibilities of the film as an artistic industry are joining this society, and they are to be toward the film what the Stage Society is to the drama. I do not understand whether the films are to include those for which licenses have not been granted for general performance, but I fear that this will be an inevitable part of the program of any society for private performances. The number of people who will support good productions in any field simply because they are good productions, and not because they are withheld for moral reasons, is very small. I do not mean that the new society is going to sit exulting at the revelations of indecent pictures. Such a scheme would be quite contrary to the taste of most of those who are to be original members.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What I say is that for the contemplation of artistic pictures there is not likely to be a very big crowd Sunday after Sunday. Besides which, I am not yet convinced that any such things as really artistic films exist. I may be wrong. Suppose we allow it to rest at the fact that I have never seen any artistic films. The best film I have so far seen is one of "The Prisoner of Zenda", in which the acting at times reached a high quality. But those big films, the performances of which the London promoters have invited all the lights to attend for purposes of edification, have never succeeded in interesting me. As far as I can see, there are some things, such as crowds, movement, and so on, which the film can render very satisfactorily; but unfortunately the things which seem to me to be the essence of life and art are beyond the scope of the camera. It is essential for me to know, or to be able to infer, what characters are thinking and feeling. Now the way in which such information is conveyed by the film at present is simply horrible. One sees villains looking villainous; and one sees heroes and heroines looking — shall we say, silly? But of real psychology one gets nothing at all, unless the actor or the producer happens to have a sudden impulse of genius. Just as it seems to be necessary for a new dramatist to arise for the wireless play, in which all is heard and nothing is seen, so I think it is necessary for a new dramatist to arise who will invent a new technique for the film play. I did not read Robert Nichols's articles in the "Times" on the subject of the film drama, but this series of articles is being discussed here with respect, so I suppose that it to some extent represents the view of an intelligent outsider. That it will have pleased the film magnates I do not anticipate. But Mr. Nichols is of a more sanguine temperament than I am, and if he believes there is a chance that the film industry will ever turn to art for its inspiration, I think he may be optimistic. In the meantime, will the new society do any good? I doubt it. It will be another of those affairs at which one will see the same people, and hear them talking loudly to each other, as one does at the Stage Society; but what good the Stage Society does to the drama I have never been able to discover. I think it helps dull intellectuals to fill out Sunday; but apart from this its utility is questionable. Now, I suppose, it will be possible to go to the æsthetic pictures in the afternoon and in the evening attend the première of a tedious play which is not to the taste of theatrical managers. What a life! No wonder our intellectuals are so bored. I should be bored myself if I were an intellectual.

* * * *

I see from the "Observer" that the egregious Mrs. Woolf has been at it again. This time she has been asserting that she would not cross the street in order to dine with Wordsworth, Byron, or Dickens. I suppose the matter seems to be of interest to Mrs. Woolf, although I cannot imagine that anybody but herself will deplore the loss of a meal which might have taught three great men what an eccentric minor novelist of our period thinks of them. But the subject is one which opens up other possibilities. I wonder just which men and women of the past it would be most interesting to meet. I should like to see all three of the men who have just been snubbed by Mrs. Woolf — just to see them and hear them talk, in order to ascertain whether the notions I have formed of them will bear personal contact. I should like to converse with Jane Austen, Sir Thomas

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Browne, Chekhov, William Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, and perhaps a dozen more celebrated writers of the past. I should like to be present, but invisible, during conversations in which Socrates took part, and in which Samuel Johnson took part, and in which Samuel Pepys took part. But I have no desire to share the conversational honors with any one of these three. I should like to meet a number of those who have great reputations as talkers, and some of those whose work has charmed me; but on the whole there are not many persons whose books I have read or whose names I have heard that I pantingly wish to have as my friends. Friends are not made as a rule because we like what they have written. My own friends, for the most part, are not writers at all; and the feeling they have for my writing is a matter of indifference to me. In the same way I am capable of liking very much a number of men and women for whose writing I have no affection. I take it that this is true of most of us. I even think that if Mrs. Woolf were to meet Wordsworth, Byron, and Dickens she would find them psychologically interesting. I am sure that I should do so; but possibly Mrs. Woolf, who suffers from the intellectual inbreeding of Bloomsbury, would miss the authentic note of self consciousness in the manner of these three great men. She would perhaps be a little shy. The boldness of print might fall away. Perhaps that was what she meant — that she is shy, and so cannot face men of original talents. Perhaps she is so much afraid of that dwarfed feeling that she cannot face conversation in which Bloomsbury gambits would go for nothing. This is a mistake. She should venture more. Life is not really so very terrible, and in spite of the modern change in human nature which Mrs. Woolf has noticed there is still left (outside Bloomsbury) much good nature of the antediluvian kind. Mrs. Woolf might miss the adulation of her friends, but she would benefit greatly from a little contact with the larger world. Precisely what Wordsworth, Byron, and Dickens would gain from the encounter I do not quite see. But even they would no doubt be diverted.

* * * *

One of the outstanding novels of the London season is Liam O'Flaherty's "The Informer", and I shall be surprised if Mr. O'Flaherty, when he learns to control his violence and his tendency to melodrama, does not take his place among the best writers of modern Ireland. He is from the Arran Islands, those small and sparsely populated islands off the coast of Galway with which the late J. M. Synge was associated. Mr. O'Flaherty's work has no resemblance at all to Synge, as far as I have made acquaintance with it. He is a strict realist. His story is powerful and disagreeable, but more powerful than disagreeable. It tells, as its title indicates, the tale of a man who, when starving, peaches upon a friend for the sake of a twenty pound reward; and describes his hunted, haunted life thereafter. Naturally, from such a beginning, the reader's mind turns to "Crime and Punishment", but this impulse is an unjust one, for there are no likenesses. The book is an original one throughout, and the precise observation of its best parts, while at times it recalls the Russian writers, is personal to Mr. O'Flaherty. I do not recall a book which has more immediately seized my attention by its vivid savagery, and this in spite of the fact that as a rule I shrink from the ordinary realistic novel as I would shrink from the plague itself, if I knew what the plague was. I wish to make it clear

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that I have been reading the book almost against my will, yet have been admiring it very greatly. For this reason I commend it to those who can appreciate a vigorous, violent, almost savagely ferocious novel, even though its ingredients may be contrary to their first prejudices. They will not, I think, be disappointed. Even if they are disappointed, their minds will have received the tonic shock which comes from contact with something genuinely powerful.

* * * *

Speaking of the Russians just now reminds me that I find both here and in America something of new prejudice against Russian books. If my impression is true, this is much to be regretted, because we have still to receive translations from the Russians of a number of first rate books. I am convinced that among modern writers we have much to gain from the experience of reading both Remizov and Biely; while among older writers Saltykov and Leskov, to name but two, are relatively unknown to English readers. It would be a great pity if satiety or the dislike of revolutionary Russia should hinder the translation of all the great Russian writers into English. We may possibly have the greatest already at our command, and we certainly have had enough of such inferior people as Andreyev, Kuprin, and Artzybashev; but there are so many of the older men to draw upon, and some such excellent work by the living or the recently dead, that the threatened loss of interest is to be deplored. I speak as the result of conversations with all sorts of people who would ordinarily be taking an intelligent interest in foreign literature. As far as I can tell, the interest of such readers is extending to Scandinavia, and the writer who is certainly regarded as the coming star is Sigrid Undset, whose novels are already, I believe, being translated into the European languages. The fact that these novels have an historical setting is against their popular success in England, whatever may be the effect of this historical setting upon American readers; but if, as I am told is likely, Sigrid Undset is shortly given the Nobel Prize, the prospects of her reputation would stand high. Concern with Scandinavian literature in this country is very fitful. Upon the other hand, concern with Russian literature has become almost second nature. Let us not fall away in the middle of our task of becoming acquainted with the greatest novels the world has ever known.

* * * *

I am under the impression that I mentioned some months ago the possible publication of Manning's letters to Charles Lamb. The book containing these letters is now ready, and I have been reading it with enthusiasm. The letters of Lamb are the most natural and delightful (in my opinion) of any that Lamb wrote, and since Manning is the correspondent of Lamb's of whom least is known, I have always longed to see his replies. For all letters have their recipients, and it is impossible for a man to write good letters — or at any rate his best letters — to a person who is personally uncongenial to him. Stevenson's letters to Charles Baxter are a case in point. Stevenson's letters to Baxter are the best, in the sense of the most intimate and least affected, that he wrote. Baxter was Stevenson's Manning. And now we have this charming volume, upon which so much care and taste has been expended, "The Letters of Thomas Manning to Charles Lamb", edited by G. A. Anderson. Mrs. Anderson was a Lamb enthusiast.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For years she had been gathering Lamb material with the object of bringing out a new and complete collection of Lamb's letters. Such a volume, of course, would be among the choicest treasure in belles lettres for all those who are not dead to the joys of the period in which Lamb lived. Owing to copyright difficulties, it cannot at present appear. But Mrs. Anderson's enthusiasm did not know any bounds, and she was fortunate enough to acquire the Manning letters which have now made their appearance. They are not complete. Some are still missing. But those we are given, which are all that are known to have survived, are delicious. They fill out the picture of a great friendship as nothing else could have done. And the way in which they have been edited is admirable. It is difficult to tell exactly where Mrs. Anderson's work leaves off and where that of her literary executor, P. P. Howe, begins; but I believe this to be the object of Mr. Howe, who has completed Mrs. Anderson's work as a memorial to her zest and scholarship. Indeed, it does not matter to the reader whether Mr. Howe or Mrs. Anderson is responsible for the notes and the running commentary which make the letters so completely intelligible. If I say that the work has been well done, that will be all that need be said upon this point. What remains — the letters of Manning — is of extraordinary interest. It has something of the interest which we should find in a new collection of letters from Lamb himself. And anything more attractive in its own line I cannot find it possible to imagine.

* * * *

ITEMS. I hear that a celebrated author was recently asked to moderate his language in an English publisher's office, upon the ground that a youth of eighteen was present, innocent but corruptible. And that the celebrated author moderated his language for this reason. Also that an interview with H. G. Wells has appeared in an American periodical, containing a photograph of what is described as "Mr. Wells's London Home". The photograph in fact is a representation of the Westminster City Hall, one of the largest buildings in the London area.

SIMON PURE

## TAMORA

By S. Foster Damon

IT was not young Eros, tumbling
juggler-like among the sharp
knives of the banquet table,

nor was it yourself, nor the purple fringe,
when you made the unintended sign
which means nothing if ignored, everything if observed.

I know now that it was the Void which I had forgotten,
crying within me to be filled with the intolerable arrows of splendor.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*Princess Angelica and Prince Giglio Walking in the Palace Garden. Reproduced from the original manuscript of "The Rose and the Ring" in the Pierpont Morgan Library*

# LITERARY TREASURE

## By Stephen Vincent Benét

I WENT looking for Christmas, the other day, in a vast and singular treasure chest. The chest itself is larger and more splendid than any Kidd ever took or Flint of the "Walrus" dreamed of when rum and the devil shared him between them at Savannah. It occupies nearly half a block on East Thirty Sixth Street between Madison and Park Avenues in New York City, and it is built of marble and stone and steel. So shrewdly guarded is it, too, that even the Arimaspians, those singular thieves of fable who attempt unceasingly to pilfer the unholy riches hidden in the magic caves where pismires keep watch and ward, would find their enterprises baffled by the sagaciousness of its warders. Yet, at first sight, the treasure would not strike the average mind with awe and wonder. There are no chinking piles of pieces-of-eight on the floor, or roc's-egg rubies out of "The Arabian Nights" to light the tall rooms with fierce enchanted radiance. The only visible treasure consists of written and printed papers, and even these are not in the form of pound notes or dollar bills. Nevertheless, to amass as much as the beginnings of a similar treasure would tax the purse of any ordinary Crœsus, ancient or modern — for the treasure chest I speak of is the



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

J. P. Morgan Library, and the treasure the books and original manuscripts it contains.

As it was, I could count over only a little of the treasure. Not from unwillingness or lack of opportunity, but because after a while the eye and the mind refuse to register further impressions clearly when impressions crowd upon them so fast. The boy in the Persian cavern, so bedazzled by heaps of gems on every side that he did not know which way to turn, was in no worse case. It is an interesting and valuable experience to look over carefully a single genuine manuscript of a great writer; but when one is turned loose in a library where one single shelf among many holds the original manuscripts, complete or partial, of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde", "Weir of Hermiston", "Vanity Fair", Sterne's letters to Kitty de Fourmantelle, Swift's "epistle to Stella", and a dozen other items equally engaging, the helpless book lover may well wish himself a combination of octopus and Argus and end by beating his head against the wall in sheer anger at his own incapacity.

Here are the title deeds to Nell Gwynne's house in Pall Mall — and here a holograph letter in which Charles II denies with perturbed vigor that he ever married any woman but his lawful queen, inadvertently or otherwise. The Merry Monarch would have enjoyed seeing these two documents juxtaposed. On another shelf, Shelley sends the manuscript of "The Cenci" to Peacock, asking his opinion and that of some theatrical manager. He has recently been reading some twelve of Calderon's plays and regards several of them as among the grandest and most perfect productions of the human mind. Will those readers who have perused even one of the plays of Calderon hold up their hands? Thank you, I do not feel quite so ashamed of my own ignorance as I did.

Take up another book — here is Shelley again — or the reproduction of a miniature of him, painted when he was a boy in a little blue brass buttoned coat, a boy with ingenuous eyes and neatly brushed red hair. Let us turn to the novelists for a moment. Dickens has overdrawn his account at the bank and wants something done about it — the "Christmas Carol" is advertised in *none* of the magazines except "Blackwood's" and he fears this will have a very bad effect on the sale. Trollope writes to his publishers:

MY DEAR CHAPMAN: —
I have told Mr. Morley that he may have the twenty guineas. I hope I am right.
A. TROLLOPE.

Who was Mr. Morley and why was he in such need of twenty guineas? We cannot suspect an ancestor of the present Christopher — if there is anything in reverse heredity, he would have been more likely to lend twenty guineas to an author than borrow it. But whoever Mr. Morley was, he was fortunate to hit upon one of the best business men among the British authors — Mr. Trollope's publishing contracts here displayed prove that. Would a publisher nowadays advance 2,500 pounds upon an "Orley Farm", we wonder?

Sterne lives near to Trollope, alphabetically, but we fear the Bishop of Barchester would not wholly approve of his reverend neighbor. True, here is a sermon by Sterne, on the text "And His Commandments Are Not Grievous", properly lugubrious in tone and addressed to "My dear Auditors"; but the handwriting of the preacher seems a trifle bored. It is far more sprightly in an accompanying manuscript where the author tells "dear Kitty" that, owing to its being Sun-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

*The Queen of Paflagonia and her Prime Minister, Glumboso. Reproduced from the original manuscript of "The Rose and the Ring" in the Pierpont Morgan Library*

day, he will be unable to meet her, unless, after his sermon (that one?) is preached and done with, she can come to a certain unobtrusive trysting place. The trysting is over with now, and so is the sermon, but Yorick, wherever he is, still has his tongue in his cheek, you may be sure of that. "Dear Kitty" ceased to please after a time, but the letters to her were well expressed, and when he writes to the next lady he blandly repeats a number of the phrases first meant for Kitty. There is a moral for sentimentalists somewhere there, though I do not know just how to frame it.

Sterne — Swift — it would be a labor of weeks merely to run through the alphabet of the great — we must pick at random and miss a hundred prizes. Here is William Morris's "House of the Wolfings". In the first few pages Morris's handwriting is like his Golden Type, at once beautiful and clear; later on it grows more hurried as the fever of the tale takes hold of him. Thackeray and Stevenson both write middling small, but Samuel Richardson's hand is smaller than either — those were days when paper was precious and letter writers and authors utilized every spare half inch of a sheet. Pope revises and revises the "Essay on Man" till the page is hieroglyphic with corrections and interlineations. Coming a little closer to our own times, here are the original drafts of "The Moonstone" and "The Woman in White", those peerless detective stories of the days before Sherlock Holmes. Will the manuscript of "The Innocence of Father Brown" ever find as splendid a sanctuary? — we hope so. Here is Byron's "Don Juan" in fat red leather volumes;

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Kipling's "Captains Courageous"; "The Deerslayer"; "Pudd'nhead Wilson"; "Life on the Mississippi"; Tennyson's early poems copied out in James Russell Lowell's hand; "Trilby", written down in a series of cheap brown notebooks, "The St. Paul's Exercise Book — 60 Pages, One Penny". Marie Antoinette's letters repose beside certain writings of Madame de Maintenon — the former volume seems to draw its pages aside a little from the contact. The manuscript of "The Owl and the Pussycat" is here, and there the manuscript of "The Brook". "The Brook" will doubtless go on forever, but then so will "The Owl and the Pussycat" — and we could go on forever, naming famous names alone, so rich in treasure trove is this single room. But when one is looking for Christmas, one has to pass many things by. I should have liked to stop for a moment at "The Adventures of Verdant Green" by Cuthbert Bede, a college story of Victorian times which makes much of the gossip about our own younger generation seem singularly pallid, and again at — and again — but we cannot see everything. We must choose a few things for our Christmas tree and be gone. But what shall we choose the first?

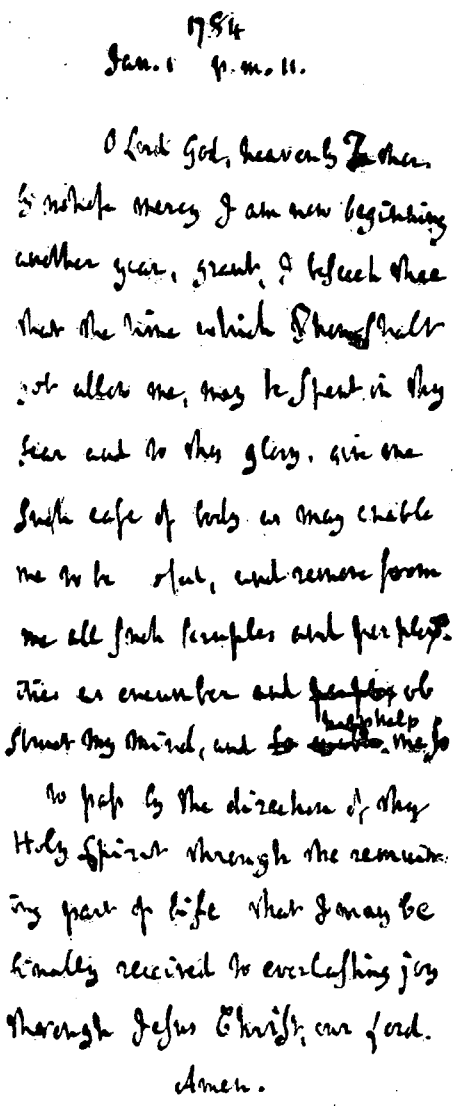
The magi, the star, the manger — they are here in vellum pages laboriously illuminated with loving patience till each page glows like cathedral glass; they are here in crabbed black letter; in fair and delicate types; but for some reason I should not turn to them first. For some reason, I should turn first to two pages of manuscript more than four hundred years old, the manuscript of a poem "London, thou art the flower of cities all" written by W. Dunbar, poet and "skotte" (so he spells himself), for the marriage of Prince Arthur, son of Henry VII, to Catharine of Aragon. The poem itself has little to do with Christmas and I do not know quite what there is about it that delights me so. Perhaps the fact that, to an uninstructed eye, the paper and ink look fresh enough to have been used a score of years ago instead of four hundred. Perhaps the fact that, on the second page, before the poet sat down to write upon it, some idle fellow outlined the watermark on the paper — the ramping figure of an absurdly fiery horse — so that when Dunbar came to use it, he had to write his lines around the horse and did so, carefully. It is one of those ordinary and tiny things that suddenly make the people of a dead year seem alive before you. I can see W. Dunbar, 1501, cursing in his best "skottes" the man who had drawn that horse on his one remaining sheet of paper — and then, lacking the money to buy another sheet, going ahead on his poem. The manuscript may be far less important, in a literary sense, than many another here, but it is the first I should choose for our Christmas tree.

Then there are the manuscripts of "A Christmas Carol" and "The Cricket on the Hearth". Christmas means Dickens or vice versa to so many people who have never endured a London fog that any American book collector who found either of these volumes in his Christmas stocking would undoubtedly dance as much of a morris dance as he could improvise on the spur of the moment. Certainly they are very interesting. "A Christmas Carol" shows more revision than the ordinary reader would expect from the rapid and easy current of the narrative — it is as if Dickens could not bear to pass the smallest object without fixing a picture of it on the page. The first pages of "The Cricket on the Hearth" are most diverting — there are four or five alternative titles set down: "The

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cricket on the Hearth", "The Cricket in the Chimney Corner", "The Cricket on the Hearth — A Tale of a Chimney Corner", till at last it is settled as "The Cricket on the Hearth — A Fairy Tale of Home." The immortal Tilly Slowboy is first written down as Becky Slowboy. There is a rough outline of the story — just the bones of it — which must fascinate all good Dickensians. I hope I am enough of a Dickensian to appreciate it, but if I were choosing for myself, I should choose this other bulky volume which would make such a pleasantly weighty package on a Christmas table — "The Rose and the Ring" manuscript with Thackeray's original illustrations.

I know "The Rose and the Ring" was written for Twelfth Night, not for Christmas, but I do not care. The drawings, especially the tinted ones, are even more delightful in the manuscript than they are in the grey-bound book I helped to read to pieces some dozen years ago; and many of the drawings here do not appear or are altered in the published text. Nor does there appear in the published text one superb chapter on the Fairy Hopstick, rival of the Fairy Blackstick, who liked fricasseed toads for supper and attempted to do some good in her own blunt way. For that alone I should choose it — as well as for the fact that Prince Giglio in the original illustrations looks singularly like a dandy D'Artagnan, and a certain drawing of a gentleman in a tutorial gown is Woodrow Wilson to the life. As for Gruffanuff, as depicted here, she is the perfect mate for the unconverted Scrooge. Perhaps in some cloud cuckoo heaven of fictional characters she has already attained that bigamous eminence. I hope so. I never believed in Scrooge's conversion; and if so, I am sure that, for once in


1784
Jan. 1 p.m. 11.

O Lord God, heavenly Father,
by whose mercy I am now beginning
another year, grant, I beseech thee
that the time which Thou shalt
yet allow me, may be spent in thy
fear and to thy glory, give me
such ease of body as may enable
me to be [illegible], and remove from
me all such scruples and perplexi-
ties as encumber and ~~perplex~~ ob-
struct my mind, and ~~to~~ ~~[illegible]~~ help me so
to pass by the direction of thy
Holy Spirit through the remain-
ing part of life that I may be
finally received to everlasting joy
through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

*Samuel Johnson's New Year's Prayer, 1784. Reproduced from the original manuscript in the Pierpont Morgan Library*

his life, Tiny Tim made an unpleasant and human remark.

The stocking is nearly full now, the lid of the treasure chest about to close. So much remains unvisited — but we cannot see all. What shall we choose to look at last, before the lid closes and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the bells ring Christmas in? We have spoken much of Christmas and little of religion — it is the way of our age — but it can do us no harm, before we go, to read what one of the most downright and courageous of all the figures in the ranks of English literature wrote down as a prayer for the New Year of 1784 in that vigorous and sinewy script which somehow seems a reflection of the massive honesty of the man. The man was Samuel Johnson, then nearing the end of his life, and the prayer he wrote runs as follows:

1784
Jan. 1. p.m. 11

O Lord God, heavenly Father, by whose mercy I am now beginning another year, grant, I beseech thee, that the time which Thou shalt yet allow me may be spent in thy fear and to thy glory, give me such ease of body as may enable me to be joyful and remove from me all such scruples and perplexities as encumber and obstruct my mind, and help me to pass by the direction of thy Holy Spirit through the remaining part of life that I may be finally received to everlasting joy through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

And so Amen — and a Merry Christmas!

## HAWK'S BEAUTY

By Robert P. Tristram Coffin

I HAVE seen beauty in a hawk
Run forth like flame across the land,
His eyes like amber bought with blood
In splendid Samarkand.

Terrible grace and beauty sheer
As cold, curved scimitars of kings,
The cruel beauty of whet steel
In his upcurling wings.

He hung against the wind and moved
Not the least feather as he rode,
Flexing disdainful wings to gales
That bore him as they flowed.

Upon the wind the hedge he conned,
His shadow standing deathly still.
I saw him drop like a plummet line;
My spine twanged with his kill.

Beautiful pain that cuts across
The tangled meshes of rank weal,
Swords and bullets, lovely hawk
Swift to strike and heal!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THE NEW YORKER

*Drab Domestic Drama Gives Way to Grand Duchesses and Iris March — A New Play by the Author of "The Vortex" — Early Schnitzler Revived by the Actors' Theatre — Miss Ferguson and Miss Barrymore Return — "The Butter and Egg Man" — A Comprehensive Show of Bellows's Work.*

THE theatre which for the past year or two has been devoted to acid realism and the "expressionistic" technique has begun with the turning of the new season to drift toward tory and reactionary standards. There are conspicuous signs of romance and melodrama and good old social comedy. Grubby housewives are giving way to grand duchesses and Iris Marches, at least so far as the public is concerned; and the theatre, more than any of the arts, is guided by the public. For someone must pay the rentals of New York playhouses, which range from $1,500 to $4,000 a week. Even a Crœsus can't go on for long pouring out gold in such quantities.

So far as we are concerned, the change is for the better. Change, no matter in what direction, is always a good thing, even when, as in this case, "the more the change the more the same thing". The first signs came last season with the popularity of a dozen excellent revivals, done in period costume. Then, as the new season dawned, the passionately romantic "Green Hat" chalked up the first great success. Immediately on its heels came "The Vortex", which when all is said and done is simply an immensely skilful and extremely modern play by Arthur Wing Pinero. "Good theatre" is an expression which one hears more and more frequently along Broadway, and the sound of it is delightful. We were a little worn by grey domestic dramas pitched in a monotone. The new season is already infinitely more amusing than the old; and for what does the theatre exist if not for amusement?

"These Charming People", a new social comedy by Mr. Arlen, which bears no relation whatever to the book of the same title, brought back to us Cyril Maude, a comedian of the old school (which is meant as the highest compliment). The play itself is a mere nothing, a bit of gauze, wafted here and there by the breezes of countless rather dubious epigrams — a fragment of the Yellow Nineties when "The Importance of Being Earnest" flourished. It is the cast which makes it good entertainment . . . a cast which includes, besides Mr. Maude, a disarming and comical young woman called Edna Best, whom the audience takes at once to its bosom, Charles Marshall, and Alma Tell. All save Miss Tell are English and they succeed, where so many actors fail, in being immensely convincing as bored ladies and gentlemen. Needless to say, the characters all reside in Mayfair; all save one are gallantly poverty stricken; and all are the quintessence of *chic*. It is amusing, and a vast relief from the passionate periods of "Desire Under the Ellums".

Noel Coward, an Englishman and Mr. Arlen's chief rival for the favors of publicity and invitations to theatrical



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

supper parties, is the author of "Hay Fever", which will probably not last as long as his now celebrated "Vortex". It is a comedy of bad manners written about a retired actress and her family, which consists of a novelist husband, an insolent son, and a bumptious daughter. Again there is no meat, but only a delightful amount of pastry. Laura Hope Crews as the middle aged actress panting to return to the boards and taking out her thirst on her family by "acting" persistently, carries off a very delicate task with all the intelligence for which she is known. She provides a superb composite portrait of all the middle aged actresses in the world temporarily out of work. Frieda Inescort is charming as the normal, healthy young daughter who never had a chance in such a preposterous household, and Harry Davenport is entirely authentic as the absent-minded novelist who is always poking into the characters of other people. We wonder at the vast amount Mr. Coward knows of that manifestation popularly known as "the artistic temperament".

The Actors' Theatre, it appears, is desperately in need of new plays or is frightened to death by them, for it has followed its successful revivals of last year with the revival of a very spotty, old fashioned play by Schnitzler, "The Call of Life". The piece has a first act which is Schnitzler at his best, a second act which is the Owen Davis of "Nellie, the Beautiful Cloak Model" at his best, and a third which is nobody in particular in a very mediocre frame of mind. But Dudley Digges as director and an excellent cast have succeeded in making the piece into a better than usual entertainment. It concerns a young girl who, tied to a horrible invalid of a father, is fading slowly into something inhuman. Driven beyond endurance, she gives her father a few hundred drops too much of a sleeping potion, and flees into the night and incidentally into the arms of a young cuirassier who is leaving in the morning for certain death at the front. It is not so simple as this, however, for in the second act the Colonel's lady also comes to the cuirassier to "give herself" and is discovered by the Colonel. Whereupon the Colonel shoots her with the air of having another drink, but with the forethought to force the cuirassier into suicide for the sake of honor. Not, however, before Marie, who has been seeking life desperately ever since the hundred extra drops, appears from a closet and "gives herself" in place of the Colonel's lady. Obviously the play ends here, but Mr. Schnitzler, to fill out the evening, writes a third act which has no more to do with the case than the flowers which bloom in the spring tra la! The dialogue, save for the first act, is generally highfalutin and given to a great deal of talk about soldier's honor, which in this day seems a little comical and fantastic. Yet the evening is a good one, chiefly on account of Eva Le Gallienne, Egon Brecher, and Katherine Alexander. Miss Le Gallienne, who we are sometimes tempted to believe is our only young actress with brains, gave a superb performance of an intensely drab rôle. She seemed thoroughly to understand what Schnitzler was driving at, even in those moments when the author himself wandered into the baldest melodrama. As the country cousin who has gone wrong in the city and dies like Camille of consumption in the last act, she looked extremely beautiful and won a sympathy which one could scarcely say is to be found in the bare rôle. Egon Brecher as the horrible old father gave what is beyond question the most vivid piece of acting

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the new season has brought. It was astonishing to see our old friend Thomas Chalmers stepping from the operatic stage into an excellent piece of work as the usual Schnitzler doctor. But to Dudley Digges the Actors' Theatre should present a crown of gold laurel sprinkled with diamonds. He has been, since the beginning, the backbone of their undertaking.

Perhaps the greatest surprise of the season was the return to their own of two of our best actresses, who for many seasons have been wandering about uncertainly. They are Elsie Ferguson and Ethel Barrymore. Miss Ferguson returned in an absurd and entertaining play by Alfred Savoir called "The Grand Duchess and the Waiter" which deals with the ups and downs of exiled Russian nobility. The ups and downs range from living in a Swiss hotel off the money brought in by the sale of the Grand Duchess Zenia's jewels, to running a cabaret in Deauville with dukes, princes, and barons as waiters, bus boys, and doormen. Against this background moves the gentle romance between Zenia and the son of the proprietor of twelve Swiss hotels. Miss Ferguson is the Grand Duchess and Basil Rathbone is delightful as the hotel proprietor's heir who, as a waiter, is learning the business from the ground up. But most of all we enjoyed the performance of Alison Skipworth as the Russian Countess, slightly damaged by age, who can't resist telling about the terrible things that happened to her during the revolution and in particular about the man who called one day announcing that he had drawn No. 13 in the state lottery. The piece has a peculiar and nonsensical charm difficult to define.

Miss Barrymore is playing Ophelia to Walter Hampden's Hamlet, and we have seldom seen more beauty in the

## THE DRAMA SHELF

*"Devonshire Cream" by Eden Phillpotts (Macmillan). Determinedly rural — but pleasant, nevertheless.*

*"The Day Before Commencement" by Francis Neilson (Viking). Domestic drama at its homeliest.*

*"Osman Pasha" by William Jourdan Rapp (Century). A curious mixture of propaganda and bombast.*

*"The Lord's Will" by Paul Green (Holt). Excellent dramas for reading or the little theatre.*

*"The Show" by John Galsworthy (Scribner). Not his best by a long shot — but better than most.*

*"Three Plays" by Padraic Colum (Macmillan). New edition of these rhythmical and telling dramas of Ireland and the Irish.*

*"Anthony and Anna" by St. John G. Ervine (Macmillan). Rather sedate froth by the author of "John Ferguson".*

*"Three John Golden Plays" (French). The producer's flight into romance.*

*"The Web" by T. Stirling Boyd (French). Active and interesting court and trial type of play.*

*"Eldorado" by Howard Peacey (French). Somewhat dull but praiseworthy historical drama.*

*"John Kemp's Wager" by Robert Graves (French). Exquisite piece of writing — this ballad opera by the well known poet.*

*"Three One Act Plays" by A. K. Clarke, A. O. Roberts, and L. du Garde Peach (French). Lovely lines and a certain quality in these poetical dramas.*

*"How to Produce Amateur Plays" by Barrett H. Clark (Little, Brown). New edition of an excellent and highly successful text.*

*"When the Movies Were Young" by Mrs. D. W. Griffith (Dutton). Reminiscences of some amusement and charm.*

*"One Third of a Bill" by Fred Jacob (Macmillan). Canadian one act plays which are not above the average.*

*"The Wonder Hat" by Kenneth Sawyer Goodman and Ben Hecht (Appleton). Excellent entertainment and dramatic value here.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

person and the performance of any actress. Mr. Hampden's interpretation is well known, and he is to be commended for the initiative and industry which has settled him into a theatre of his own where he will devote the winter to repertory.

It seems that no first rate musical show is complete nowadays without costumes and sets by James Reynolds, the most able colorist working in the American theatre. He has contributed to "Sunny" what is the best part of an expensive and pretentious entertainment, and his settings and costumes for "The Vagabond King" are worth seeing many times. Both these pieces are meeting with immense success. "Sunny", starring Marilyn Miller, who is as charming as ever and dances if possible more beautifully than she has ever done, is so stupendous an affair that one is dazzled by cast, settings, orchestra, etc. into believing that it is better than it is. The book is plain stupid, the music very fair, and the cast one hundred carat. In "The Vagabond King" Dennis King in the slightly embroidered rôle of François Villon shares the honors with Mr. Reynolds's investiture.

Last but not least we found "The Butter and Egg Man" a grand show, especially in the work of Lucille Webster, Robert Middlemass, and Denman Maley. In the title rôle Gregory Kelly gave a type performance of the sort he has succeeded in capitalizing admirably. Since the piece, from the title on through, is concerned with the inside of Broadway, a word of explanation is necessary. A "butter and egg man" in the parlance of Broadway is "a sap with money" from the provinces — the sort that falls prey to shady theatrical producers and gold digging chorus girls. The comedy concerns itself with the trials of Peter Jones who comes to Broadway from Chillicothe, Ohio, with $20,000, to break into what he calls "the theatrical game". Woven through it runs the thin but necessary (for box office purposes) romance of Mr. Jones and a stenographer. Miss Webster is nothing short of superb as the female ex-juggler who keeps throwing cold water on the whole business, and Mr. Maley as the half witted hotel clerk who also wants to take a fling at "the theatrical game" provides the most perfect moron we have ever seen on the stage.

Not quite a year after the death of George Bellows, the Metropolitan Museum has turned over two of its large galleries to an exhibition of his work. Whatever may have been the place held in the public mind by Mr. Bellows during his lifetime, it is vastly augmented by this comprehensive show of his work. It places him in our opinion not only among the first of the contemporary American painters but among the really great American painters of all time. The exhibition contains examples of his work ranging from the early Nineteen Hundreds up to the striking "Crucifixion" which crowned the show of the American Art Exhibition last spring. The range and scope of the work is intensely interesting, especially in its relation to the French painters of the last half century. It is another striking proof of the immense influence of the French. In the earlier pictures there is clear evidence of the influence of Manet; a little later the brush of Mr. Bellows shows a leaning toward Renoir with traces of Monet, and still later there are evidences that the American painter cast an eye on Cézanne. But the significant fact is that throughout the entire progression there is also a strong touch that is Mr. Bellows's alone . . . a touch, however, which has

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

again a definite relation to the work of Robert Henri and Eugene Speicher.

Not the least fascinating is the collection of lithographs containing the admirable series dealing with the prize ring and what is to us the most dramatic (perhaps even theatrical) picture we have ever encountered — "Edith Cavell". It would be possible to write many thousand words on the Bellows show, an event to which we feel incapable of doing justice. It is to be hoped that the show will be taken intact to other parts of the United States, for it is the best possible propaganda in behalf of American painting.

With this issue of THE BOOKMAN, the New Yorker is forced to retire with a confession, already known to many of his friends, that he is by birth not a New Yorker at all, but by divine right the best of New Yorkers because he was born in the middle west, whence comes most of Manhattan's population which is not foreign born. Like all good New Yorkers he is going to Paris, and on leaving he turns over his department to that rarest of creatures — a man who was born in New York and has lived there all his life. Larry Barretto, who succeeds to the throne, and the attendant free tickets, is already known as a novelist of distinction and a gentleman about town.

LOUIS BROMFIELD

## WHEN MARTIN PLAYS UPON THE FLUTE

By Lizette Woodworth Reese

WHEN Martin plays upon the flute,
He is a shepherd. Deep
Within the half lit hills he goes
To seek for his lost sheep.

His staff is made of gentle stuff,
From some place very far;
Across the shadowy, narrow grass
His cloak gleams like a star.

So sadly clear that call of his
To house from dark and cold,
Not any straggler of them all
Can keep back from that fold.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THE BOOKMAN'S GUIDE TO FICTION

*THE BOOKMAN will present each month tabloid reviews of a selected list of recent fiction. This section will include also the books most in demand according to the current reports in "Books of the Month", compiled by the R. R. Bowker Company, The Baker and Taylor Company's "Retail Bookseller", and THE BOOKMAN'S "Monthly Score". Such books as the editor specially recommends are marked with a star.*

THE HARPER PRIZE SHORT STORIES — *Harper.* The results of a short story contest, proving the superiority of our practised magazine writers over inspired unknowns.

MORE ACES — *Putnam.* Fifteen short stories by some of the surest fire writers for American magazines.

* DARK LAUGHTER — Sherwood Anderson — *Boni, Liveright.* The old triangle developed with Mr. Anderson's usual flair for the mystic and the psychological, to say nothing of the neurological.

CONCERNING HIM — Anonymous — *Doran.* The anonymous confession of an American man's love affairs, several French ones included.

THE WIND — Anonymous — *Harper.* The Texas wind is the protagonist and plays havoc with the life and happiness of a fragile girl from Virginia.

* THE GREEN HAT — Michael Arlen — *Doran.* It has been called, by a famous dramatic critic, a "sweet" story. Before that it had been termed highly sophisticated. Can it be both?

* THE OFFICE — Nathan Asch — *Harcourt, Brace.* Extraordinary satire on American business. (*See page 501.*)

THE CRYSTAL CUP — Gertrude Atherton — *Boni, Liveright.* With a starved sex theme, Mrs. Atherton naturally and popularly rescues her heroine from starvation.

THIRTEEN — F. Britten Austin — *Doubleday, Page.* Of these short stories, "Nach Verdun", the best of them all, made a hit in the magazine issue.

THE HOLLY HEDGE — Temple Bailey — *Penn.* A gift book of stories designed to fit in with Christmas feelings.

THE SPELL OF SARNIA — Mrs. Baillie-Reynolds — *Doran.* Sarnia is a wild English island, and in this setting Mrs. Baillie-Reynolds develops an unusual story.

PETER IN PROCESS — Olaf Baker — *Dodd, Mead.* The antics of a high spirited Irish boy in the midst of his Quaker family, told with a mannered deliberation that grows somewhat tedious.

GLORIOUS APOLLO — E. Barrington — *Dodd, Mead.* Poets seem to be coming into their own as figures of romance. Here Byron and his lady love languish for the benefit of today's seekers after the unattainable.

THE MARRIAGE GUEST — Konrad Bercovici — *Boni, Liveright.* New York is the background for this story of spiritual and physical love.

BINDON PARVA — George A. Birmingham — *Bobbs-Merrill.* Tiny English hamlets yield good material in well schooled hands like these.

THE EMIGRANTS — Johan Bojer — *Century.* A disinterested dramatic story teller observing the American saga from a Scandinavian angle. Another competent Bojer novel, written for the American market. (*See page 494.*)

MEADOWLARK BASIN — B. M. Bower — *Little, Brown.* The author's numerous readers will be pleased with this new cowboy story.

* DRUMS — James Boyd — *Scribner.* This wistful hero, Johnny, of Revolutionary days, is destined to become even more famous than Richard Carvel.

SWIFT ADVENTURE — Jane Cardinal — *Doran.* Lives up to its title in a series of rushing events.

* THE PROFESSOR'S HOUSE — Willa Cather — *Knopf.* An idealist who cannot readjust himself to the success of the world.

STEEL DECKS — James B. Connolly — *Scribner.* One of the very good yarns spun about life afloat.



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE ANCIENT HIGHWAY — James Oliver Curwood — *Cosmopolitan.* A stirring climax and a good love story make it one of the most thrilling of this gentleman's out-of-door stories, if you like that type of thrill.

BELSHAZZAR — William Stearns Davis — *Macmillan.* The Fall of Babylon, Daniel, and Darius the Persian are made to live again before our eyes.

WINGS OF DESIRE — Maurice Dekobra — *Macaulay.* A French adventurer becomes involved in plot and counterplot in New York and is finally the victim of his own amorous vagaries. Mildly exciting and decidedly cheap.

COLLECTED SHORT STORIES — Conan Doyle — *Doran.* Some of the best of the tales of mystery and the unknown on which his reputation is based.

THE SELMANS — V. R. Emanuel — *Dial.* More tract than novel.

THE SMITHS — Janet Fairbank — *Bobbs-Merrill.* Chicago Smiths, by any other name as Chicagoan.

VAINGLORY — Ronald Firbank — *Brentano.* A reprint of an earlier book which the author admits is his smartest. He ought to know, for on smartness he is an authority.

THE SHADOW OF THE WOLF — R. Austin Freeman — *Dodd, Mead.* Thorndyke, the medico-legal detective, solves a pretty mystery by pure logic.

* CARAVAN — John Galsworthy — *Scribner.* Carefully and beautifully wrought stories in the best Galsworthy manner.

* THE WHITE MONKEY — John Galsworthy — *Scribner.* Genuinely understanding study of postwar conditions and their effect on several generations.

* SOUNDINGS — A. Hamilton Gibbs — *Little, Brown.* As wise a study of various types of love as has been written in many seasons.

MAD MARRIAGE — George Gibbs — *Appleton.* Admitting any man could be such a visionary fool, the story is logical and well told.

* BARREN GROUND — Ellen Glasgow — *Doubleday, Page.* Rich in background and in the understanding of a woman's soul is this novel of southern scene.

Y'UNDERSTAND — Montague Glass — *Doubleday, Page.* Pathos and bathos are cleverly blended in these moving pictures of New York's East Side.

SETTLERS OF THE MARSH — Frederick Philip Grove — *Doran.* A powerful yarn of love and struggle in the northland.

ANDREW BRIDE OF PARIS — Henry Sydnor Harrison — *Houghton Mifflin.* An amusing tale of a youthful American critic who would renounce forever the fleshpots of his native country for the spiritual enchantments of Paris.

THE ISLAND OF THE GREAT MOTHER — Gerhart Hauptmann — *Viking.* What happens in a fantastic feminist Utopia when one hundred women are shipwrecked with a twelve year old boy. (*See page 513.*)

IN OUR TIME — Ernest Hemingway — *Boni, Liveright.* Sketches which show clear, vigorous beauty and a vigorous acceptance of life in its proper proportions.

LITTLE TIGER — Anthony Hope — *Doran.* Modern London is the setting for this story of a sophisticated lady.

ONE INCREASING PURPOSE — A. S. M. Hutchinson — *Little, Brown.* A mixture of excellent characterization and rather involved philosophical strugglings.

* THE CONSTANT NYMPH — Margaret Kennedy — *Doubleday, Page.* Idiosyncrasy made the real theme of a briskly written and engaging story.

LADIES OF LYNDON — Margaret Kennedy — *Doubleday, Page.* This first novel is interesting for flashes of the ability which later produced "The Constant Nymph".

BALCONY STORIES — Grace King — *Macmillan.* Atmospheric sketches of Creole New Orleans, with a limited, somewhat sentimental, but definite appeal. A reissue with two new stories.

* ARROWSMITH — Sinclair Lewis — *Harcourt, Brace.* One of the really fine American novels of the decade.

QUEER JUDSON — Joseph C. Lincoln — *Appleton.* Downs and ups of another lovable Cape Cod hero who looks like Abraham Lincoln and acts like Joseph C.

THE GREAT PANDOLFO — William J. Locke — *Dodd, Mead.* A glamorous lady and a proud gentleman break down their mutual pride in the inevitable conclusion of a swift romance.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MELLOWING MONEY — Francis Lynde — *Scribner*. Out of evil comes good — a pretty problem cleverly handled.

MY TOWER IN DESMOND — S. R. Lysaght — *Macmillan*. A story of Ireland with a non-republican tinge — too verbose for its substance.

AT THE SIGN OF THE SUN — Virginia MacFadyen — *A. and C. Boni*. Love among the Gloos, especially that of Ranok and Ygli. Real people in an imaginary setting.

A BUSH THAT BURNED — Marjorie Barkley McClure — *Minton, Balch*. A clash of ideals — youthful scorn of compromise vs. mature tolerance — in this readable story of two lovers.

ROMEO IN MOON VILLAGE — George Barr McCutcheon — *Dodd, Mead*. Seven lovely maidens to a single Romeo, but the clever author works bravely out of the tangle.

DECEMBER THE FOURTEENTH — Dmitri Merezhkovsky — *International*. A stirring fictional account of the brilliant, desperate revolution of 1825 when Nicholas I ascended the throne; of particular interest in the light of present day Russia.

EAST OF EDEN — Lynn Montross — *Harper*. Another picture of middle western farm life which does not differ radically from its dun colored predecessors.

CLOSED ALL NIGHT — Paul Morand — *Seltzer*. The companion volume to "Open All Night" — equally Gallic in content and pyrotechnical in style.

* WE MUST MARCH — Honoré Willsie Morrow — *Stokes*. Marcus Whitman's brilliant service in opening the Oregon Trail described with loving sympathy.

AND THEY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER! — Meredith Nicholson — *Scribner*. An ambitious woman, her uncommercial husband, and the other angle of the triangle. Mildly interesting.

LITTLE SHIPS — Kathleen Norris — *Doubleday, Page*. A study of parents and children over a period of years which shows extraordinary understanding of the problems of middle class life.

COLLECTED STORIES AND TALES — Fitz-James O'Brien — *A. and C. Boni*. Resurrection of pleasing rococo pieces by a neglected American worthy of the late Fifties.

MARRIED LIFE — Edith O'Shaughnessy — *Harcourt, Brace*. Vignettes of the married state with a tragic tinge. Interesting though not significant.

WILD GEESE — Martha Ostenso — *Dodd, Mead*. An additional innate canto — done in the Scandinavian manner — of the odyssey of the soil now being written. (*See page 494.*)

THE HIDDEN YEARS — John Oxenham — *Longmans, Green*. Tender and wise story of Christ's early years. (*See page 502.*)

BROKEN WATERS — Frank L. Packard — *Doran*. A long adventure tale with a tropical background and many climaxes.

* THE POWER AND THE GLORY — Gilbert Parker — *Harper*. LaSalle's gallant struggles to win the west for France have found a worthy chronicler.

THE PERENNIAL BACHELOR — Anne Parrish — *Harper*. The Harper prize novel — finely written and uncompromising piece of realism.

RED ASHES — Margaret Pedler — *Doran*. Character and love are never lost, says this quick and exciting tale of a young doctor and a madcap girl.

THE KEEPER OF THE BEES — Gene Stratton-Porter — *Doubleday, Page*. The life of the honey bee offers Mrs. Porter a chance to find bees human and humankind sweet.

CRAIG KENNEDY ON THE FARM — Arthur B. Reeve — *Harper*. This clever and popular detective proves equal to rural criminals as in former stories he caught city bandits.

P. A. L. — Felix Riesenberg — *McBride*. The portrait of a paste Napoleon of big business in an elaborate but somewhat stodgy frame.

* THE RED LAMP — Mary Roberts Rinehart — *Doran*. A romantic mystery that is chock full of humor as well as suspense.

THE LOVE RACK — Cecil Roberts — *Stokes*. A melodrama of the erring woman, surprisingly naive for this day of mockery.

DOCTOR TRANSIT — I. S. — *Boni, Liveright*. A story of sex transformation as dull as it seems pointless.

THE STROLLING SAINT — Rafael Sabatini — *Houghton Mifflin*. The story of the world's attraction set over against saintli-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ness; but with his genius for titles and story telling Mr. Sabatini makes it live.

* THE LITTLE FRENCH GIRL — Anne Douglas Sedgwick — *Houghton Mifflin.* Alix still claims attention, with her flittings across the channel, in weather mostly smooth.

THE HAPPY FAILURE — Solita Solano — *Putnam.* The ubiquitous undergraduate and his soul, lately among us so determinedly, somehow fail to enthrall.

THE CHARWOMAN'S DAUGHTER — James Stephens — *Macmillan.* A reissue of "Mary, Mary" which is as poignant and beautiful and just as Irish as ever. (*See page 501.*)

THE MADONNA OF THE BARRICADES — J. St. Loe Strachey — *Harcourt, Brace.* An English gentleman and an Italian countess fight for liberty in the streets of Paris in 1848. Formal as the period and not quite so exciting.

VOLCANO — Ralph Straus — *Holt.* The romance of a middle aged spinster. A promising theme spoiled by an involved style.

* THE ELDER SISTER — Frank Swinnerton — *Doran.* A finely woven study of two sisters in love with the same man. (*See page 501.*)

THE RUNAWAY BAG — Albert Payson Terhune — *Doran.* From America to the deserts of Algiers runs this story of escapade, adventure, and pursuit.

HALF TOLD TALES — Henry van Dyke — *Scribner.* Pellets of wisdom served up in little fables.

FIRECRACKERS — Carl Van Vechten — *Knopf.* Blowing up with energy and sophisticated insinuations is this sputtering novel.

SHANKLIN — Webb Waldron — *Bobbs-Merrill.* A rambling record of a bootless search for a lost pal.

* THE PORTRAIT OF A MAN WITH RED HAIR — Hugh Walpole — *Doran.* The most exciting story he has written in years, with descriptions surpassing in color the unusual character of the events.

* FABER, OR THE LOST YEARS — Jacob Wassermann — *Harcourt, Brace.* Postwar spiritual readjustment in marriage beautifully told.

THE DAUGHTER OF THE HOUSE — Carolyn Wells — *Lippincott.* Fleming Stone solves a very obvious mystery.

* CHRISTINA ALBERTA'S FATHER — H. G. Wells — *Macmillan.* Mr. Preemby is his most interesting male character since Britling, and Chrissy herself is inimitable. (*See page 370.*)

SKOOKUM CHUCK — Stewart Edward White — *Doubleday, Page.* Subtle, and full of excitement.

THE KENWORTHYS — Margaret Wilson — *Little, Brown.* A specialist in families, Miss Wilson finds a new one worthy of her talent.

THURSDAY'S CHILD — Mary Wiltshire — *Dodd, Mead.* Grim and fascinating, well told.

BEAU GESTE — Percival C. Wren — *Stokes.* Adventure and mystery clamor with each other over many miles in an excellent story.

A SON OF HIS FATHER — Harold Bell Wright — *Appleton.* One of the most Irish of Irish heroines finds her strong hero and tames him — in the west with a capital W, of course.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# A SHELF OF RECENT BOOKS

## REENTER WASHINGTON AND JEFFERSON

By David Saville Muzzey

FROM Mr. F. W. Hirst of "The London Economist" comes our first biography of Thomas Jefferson written by an Englishman. It is a careful piece of work, giving evidence of a thorough acquaintance with the public papers and private correspondence of Jefferson himself as well as with the best of the secondary material on the subject. It is also an extremely sympathetic piece of work. One can see on almost every page the evidences of Mr. Hirst's approval of the political and social philosophy of the great Virginian — his passion for democracy, his confidence in a program of education for citizenship, his abhorrence of any public constraint upon men's conscience.

Mr. Hirst presents his material in chronological rather than in topical form, with chapters on Jefferson's career as a radical leader in the campaign for American independence, as a reforming governor of Virginia, as Minister to France, as Secretary of State, as organizer of the Democratic-Republican party, and as President of the United States, with a final section on Jefferson in retirement, containing delightful chapters on the life at Monticello and the establishment of the University of Virginia. But the book is more than a mere narrative biography. The apologetic purpose is evident throughout. Jefferson has been misunderstood and misinterpreted again and again, and Mr. Hirst is eager to vindicate his hero against the sneers and slanders of which he has been the victim. He evidently means his book to be an antidote to his fellow Englishman Oliver's panegyric on Alexander Hamilton at the expense of Jefferson, and to the reflections cast upon Jefferson's courage and ability as Governor of Virginia by Eckenrode, Morse, Roosevelt, and others. He deplores the fact that Jefferson is not better known in his own country, and blames the British historians (with the conspicuous exceptions of Lecky and Trevelyan) for their lack of interest in the America of the Revolutionary period. Incidentally, it may be said that no extremest Anglophobe in America today could outdo Mr. Hirst in his condemnation of the policy of George III and his ministers who estranged and finally lost the American colonies. "The insensate policy of coercion", "the unwisdom which passes understanding", "the colossal stupidity of the British Government", are samples of his phrases of invective. In England apparently there is no emotional patriotic embargo upon the criticism of public men of a former generation!

There are times when Mr. Hirst's enthusiasm for Jefferson leads him into what we believe to be an exaggerated and indefensible apologetic. We doubt, for example, whether Jefferson's theory of dealing with the public debt was as wise as Hamilton's (though Mr. Hirst is an authority on public finance), or whether the author does justice to either Marshall or John Randolph in the matter of their opposition to Jefferson; or, again, whether Jefferson should be excused for his indifference to the information which came to him of Burr's treasonable activities on the



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ground that "Jefferson had more important matters in hand and was not anxious to arouse antagonisms by anything that might be regarded as harshness towards Burr" (page 264). Neither do we sympathize with Jefferson's lame excuse that he was "duped" by Hamilton in the matter of the assumption of the State debts (page 167), or excuse him for the use to which he put his patronage of Freneau and his friendship with Mazzei. We wish that Jefferson had not written the "Anas".

That some errors of statement occur in Mr. Hirst's excellent book is neither strange nor unpardonable. Most American authors would probably have made more. There are a few points, also, that might have been more fully developed by Mr. Hirst in a biography of this rather generous size, such as the details of the reform program in Virginia in 1776–1779 and the general consequences of the Embargo policy of 1808.

"The Diaries of George Washington", published for the most part from manuscript copies in the Library of Congress, hardly warrant, in our opinion, the expenditure of time put upon the work. In the first place, they are provokingly fragmentary, in spite of the hundreds of pages they fill. The parts that we should most like to have are "missing or not written". For example, there are no entries from June 19, 1775 to May 1, 1781, and it is, therefore, only for the last six months of the Revolutionary War that we have Washington's detailed account of the operations. Again, there is a lacuna from November 5, 1781 to September 1, 1784, when we have an account of Washington's visit to his western lands — interesting enough for some incidental reflections upon the situation of the west in relation to Spain. We read of Washington's journey to attend the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia in May, 1787, and of the gradual arrival of the members from the various states; but when the membership is completed and the business begun we are shut off with the entry (June 1, 1787): "Attending in Convention, and nothing being suffered to transpire [i.e., be published], no minutes of the proceedings has been or will be inserted in this diary" (Volume III, page 220). Therefore Washington's entries for the momentous days of the summer of 1787 consist of the monotonous enumeration of the hosts and hostesses with whom he "drank tea". The diaries are "missing" again from February to September, 1790, so that we have no account of the first inauguration or the early months of the first presidential term. Indeed, all we have of the period of the first term is the record of the visits to the New England States in 1789 and to the Southern States in 1791; while the only part of the public record of the second term that is preserved is a few pages on the Whisky Rebellion of 1794.

On the other hand, hundreds of pages are devoted to the most monotonous and unedifying entries pertaining to the petty details of the farms at Mount Vernon, Dogue Run, and other localities: fences built, trees planted, tobacco crops harvested, horses bought and sold, sick slaves treated, and relatives and visitors entertained. For the student of agriculture these interminable pages may have a charm (though that quality is strangely missing in Washington's style) and a significance. For the historian they are almost worthless.

---

The Life and Letters of Thomas Jefferson. By Francis W. Hirst. The Macmillan Company.

The Diaries of George Washington. Edited by John C. Fitzpatrick. Four volumes. Houghton Mifflin Company.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

## THREE DYNAMIC SOULS

By Allan Nevins

DESPITE the fact that Byron's life was subjected during the nineteenth century to one of the fiercest lights that ever beat upon a poetical throne, some of the most important evidence upon his character has been made public only within the last five years. His correspondence with Lady Melbourne was published in 1922 by John Murray, and a new edition of "Astarte", with many additional letters, was issued in 1921. The shock which these volumes gave to Byron's admirers is still fresh in mind. They made a new biography necessary, and Ethel Colburn Mayne's recent revision of her admirable Life was not extensive enough to fill the gap. It is fortunate that a writer so well equipped as John Drinkwater — a poet himself, a critic, a keen student of human nature — has essayed to supply it. For the title he borrows Shelley's phrase, "The Pilgrim of Eternity".

Though his method is judicial, Mr. Drinkwater's temper is so sympathetic that his biography is essentially a defense of or apologia for Byron. He admires Byron for his genius, his humanity, his vein of heroism, and above all for his irresistible energy. Admitting many of Byron's faults, he regards some of them as the defects of his virtues, while he says of others that it was not so much the sin but the full and frank confession of it that dismayed the world. Mr. Drinkwater opens with a full examination of the evidence in the case of Byron and his half sister Augusta Leigh, and unlike Miss Mayne, who regards Byron's guilt as proved, holds that a decision cannot be given. His reasoning is not always convincing. Too often he seems to construe every doubt in Byron's favor. Thus he lays emphasis upon Lady Byron's attitude of seeming affection toward Augusta Leigh at the very time that (by her later statements) she suspected Augusta of the criminal connection; yet this is not difficult to explain when we recall that Lady Byron was struggling against the idea, was inexperienced, and was only twenty three. The author's conclusion is that Byron would probably be acquitted by an English court of law, but that it is impossible to feel "that a strong presumptive suspicion against him has been removed". Yet even guilt, to Mr. Drinkwater, can little impair the appeal, pungency, and power of Byron's character. He sums up the poet as "an incalculable being, full of ungovernable or ungoverned impulses, touched with an almost incurable theatrical waywardness, and in an almost violent degree" the representative of post-revolutionary Europe.

Mr. Drinkwater has marked narrative talent, and his charm of style makes his account of Byron's life, though lacking in as many illuminative flashes as we might expect, absorbing. All the familiar materials are used, and some that are new — e.g., Edmund Gosse's recollections of certain lost diary materials bearing upon the most unsavory side of Byron's career. The attempt throughout is to bring a clear cut personality out of the story, and this is done by full, direct strokes, not by the ironic economy of our newer school of portraitists. Indeed, Mr. Drinkwater might sometimes have enhanced his effects by a more sparing selection of data. But at all points his position is that if we can but comprehend Byron, we shall regard him with warm sympathy.

In part we meet the familiar ideas. The basic misfortunes of Byron's life are thrown into relief: his unhappy

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

parentage; his wretched childhood and youth; his premature and unhealthy success; his unfortunate marriage with a cold, inappreciative woman, the most unsuitable mate he could have found. Mr. Drinkwater makes these facts excuse as much as other admiring biographers have done. The most original feature of the volume is Mr. Drinkwater's insistence that the pivotal point of Byron's career is to be found in his emergence as a spoiled darling of London society after his success with "Childe Harold". The poet's head was turned, and he became a Byron attitudinizing in somewhat Satanic postures. "It is the conflict of Byron the poet with this other Byron begotten by society upon his own weaknesses", says Mr. Drinkwater, "that is really the leitmotif of the story." This is a theory that, while perhaps too simple, has genuine value. And with a considerable debt to Harold Nicolson, Mr. Drinkwater shows how in the end, drawing his sword for the Greeks, Byron the essential poet and the essential hero as well gained the upper hand. "The Pilgrim of Eternity" is by no means an impartial biography, but it is an able and persuasive presentation of the case for a great genius.

Mr. Drinkwater includes less criticism of Byron's poetical work than, in view of his unusual competence, we should like to have. Byron, he tells us, is the most slovenly of all the great British poets; he has little imaginative pressure; he lacks philosophic depth, and is deficient in a sense of design. But for vigor, rapidity of movement, and brilliant sharpness of impact he stands preeminent — this is the author's rather conventional judgment. Yet we are glad to hear him speak up for the third and fourth cantos of "Childe Harold", a work at which it has become all too fashionable to sneer. Certainly no more magnificent rhetoric has ever been written, and Mr. Drinkwater shows sense as well as courage when he selects one highly rhetorical passage after another for laudation. Some of the versified tales, the "Laras" and "Parisinas", are poor stuff, and the dramas are full of faults. But if we are to admire Byron for his energy, we cannot fail to admire the final cantos of "Childe Harold" and the dazzling "Don Juan".

Seldom is a book more clearly a labor of love than Albert Bigelow Paine's "Joan of Arc: Maid of France". Thirty years ago a reading of Mark Twain's "Personal Recollections" of Joan inspired in him an admiration for the girl saint which led him to visit and revisit the scenes of her exploits. There followed years of patient study of the facts of her life, and we have the result in a history written with a rare combination of scholarly thoroughness and literary grace. The author employs his familiarity with the scenes amid which Joan spent her life to give his picture of her labors and martyrdom a vividness that is lacking in the pages of Andrew Lang's study; and while we are not annoyed by excessive credulity, there is none of that tone of ultra-rationalistic skepticism which runs like an unpleasant undercurrent through Anatole France's history of the Maid.

The design of the volume follows somewhat unusual lines. The record of Joan's childhood and youth, a beautiful vignette of mediæval life, is all too briefly dismissed; the reader would like to linger over these fragrant pages, describing the simple peasant home of Domremy and the devout life of the young girl who grew up to listen to the celestial "voices". Then comes a swift, inspiriting narrative of Joan's entrance into the war, and the strokes by which she relieved Orleans and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

made possible the coronation of Charles at Rheims. The book is as yet but half finished. Its whole second half is given up to a history of Joan's trial and final martyrdom, and it is Mr. Paine's finest exploit that he has made this long inquisition a tale of unfailing suspense and dramatic value. He outlines the ruthless intentions of the Duke of Bedford, who determined to destroy Joan in such a way as to discredit Charles's coronation — as a witch; he shows how it suited the Catholic Church and the University of Paris to cooperate in the crime. The different personages are sharply characterized — the cruel, determined, yet admirably patriotic Bedford; the skilled and crafty Cauchon, Joan's ecclesiastical judge; the sickening spy Loiseleur, introduced by the inquisition into Joan's cell to win her confidence and betray her. The serenity, sense, and occasional mordant wit of Joan's testimony are fully illustrated, and the narrative rises to a natural climax with the story of Joan's wasting illness, her partial collapse and recantation, her recovery, and her martyrdom.

If the book has a notable fault, it is that its simplicity sometimes seems excessive and studied. But as a whole it is a life worthy of the Maid, the finest study of her in the language, and one which hits its less imaginative mark more surely and fairly than Mark Twain's book.

To turn from such volumes as Mr. Drinkwater's and Mr. Paine's to Edouard Herriot's "Madame Récamier" is to find rather hard going. It is more than twenty years since M. Herriot published his elaborate and exhaustive biography of the brilliant Frenchwoman. Alys Hallard's translation soon followed, for Mme. Récamier, the friend of Constant and Châteaubriand, the intimate of Mme. de Staël, a centre of French society from the days of the Consulate to the rise of Louis Napoleon, has always been a figure to interest Anglo-Saxon readers. It is unnecessary to say more than that M. Herriot, now an ex-premier, ascertained every possible fact about Mme. Récamier, that his two volumes are a mine of information, and that they have decided *longueurs* alternating with engrossing patches.

---

The Pilgrim of Eternity: Byron — A Conflict. By John Drinkwater. George H. Doran Company.
Joan of Arc: Maid of France. By Albert Bigelow Paine. Two volumes. The Macmillan Company.
Madame Récamier. By Edouard Herriot. Translated by Alys Hallard. Two volumes. Boni and Liveright.

## NEGRO SPIRITUALS

By Walter White

IN velvety cascades there have flown within the last few years from the lips of Roland Hayes and Julius Bledsoe and Paul Robeson the hauntingly beautiful Negro spirituals. Throughout America and Europe these songs have gained a well deserved vogue and there has come to them the recognition so long denied them. Singer after singer has programmed them with songs by Bach and Schubert and Brahms and César Franck, and it is by such comparisons that they have been recognized as the great music many of them are.

It was inevitable that there should follow in the wake of this recognition collections of these songs and critical appraisals of their music and their words. A few months ago Gerald Johnson and Howard Odum, two young southern white men, published their sympathetic and sound preliminary

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inquiry, largely sociological in manner, "The Negro and His Songs". The Harvard University Press has recently brought out Dorothy Scarborough's "On the Trail of Negro Folk Songs", an elaborate and exhaustive analysis of the little known work songs, the fruit of a lifelong study of this music by Miss Scarborough in her native Texas and other southern states. And here we have yet a third valuable addition by a southerner, R. Emmet Kennedy's "Mellows: Negro Work Songs, Street Cries and Spirituals"; and what is probably the best of them all, "The Book of American Negro Spirituals" by James Weldon Johnson who, being a Negro, gets down beneath the surface of this music and reveals the extraordinary processes by which it came into being and grew.

These last two books, subject of the present appraisal, approach their common subject from wholly different angles. Mr. Kennedy does not attempt extended critical analysis of the music which intrigues him but instead gives charming little vignettes of the life in his native Louisiana, telling of the singers and their songs as he heard them there. Mr. Johnson in an introductory essay of some forty pages gives us what is by far the most interesting and satisfying examination of the factors which brought this music into being and those which shaped it into its present majesty and beauty and wistful sadness. To his task Mr. Johnson brings not only a deep devotion but a superb critical sense, and a profound knowledge of the emotional wellsprings of these songs which, in all charity, a white person is incapable of gaining. The late Henry Krehbiel in his "Afro-American Folksongs" gave a technical exposition of Negro music which was sound and sympathetic, yet lacking in that deeper understanding so necessary to a full picture. Natalie Curtis Burlin did much in bringing a fuller recognition of the value and beauty and power of the spirituals, but

*From "Mellows"*

she too suffered because she was approaching them from without. Mr. Johnson, however, knows what lies back of this music: the sorrows and joys, the wistful longing for surcease from pain and bitterness, the stalwart determination voiced with such haunting melody in songs like "I Ain't Going to Study War No Mo'", the sublime confidence in an all-powerful God. The use of rhythm and melody, the solo and chorus arrangements, the blending of the beautiful in primitive African rites with the more spiritual and beautiful parts of the Christian religion, the variations and additions to the scanty store of songs in isolated regions brought by itinerant singers like "Singing Johnson" and "Ma White", are all told of in fascinating fashion. And for the first time Mr. Johnson gives

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a satisfactory explanation of a thing which many, many times caused chills of I didn't know what to run up and down my spine — "the curious turns and twists and quavers and the intentional striking of certain notes just a shade off the key".

But the essay is not all. Mr. Johnson's brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, and Lawrence Brown, who with Paul Robeson gained last spring so notable a success in New York in the rendition of programs of spirituals, have contributed the words and music to sixty one spirituals, many of them familiar, many of them never heard before, which by their beauty are indicative of the great wealth of these songs as yet undiscovered.

Mr. Kennedy too gives us songs, twenty five in number, a combination, as the title of his book indicates, of spirituals and work songs and street cries. The titles of many of them are sufficient in themselves to indicate the abundance of poetic imagination which went into the making of this music — such titles as "Go Down, Death", "He Never Said a Mumblin' Word", "Toll the Bell, Angel". Similarly, in Mr. Johnson's book we have such intriguing titles as "The Blood Came Twinklin' Down", "Singing With a Sword in My Hand", "I've Got to Walk My Lonesome Valley", "Steal Away to Jesus".

Here are gorgeously interesting records of the vocal expressions of a gifted, imaginative, poetic race, dowered with the inestimably precious gift of song and ebullient resistance to material discomforts. No person can read either of these volumes with any degree of understanding and still feel condescension toward this music, one of the very few gifts to the realm of art and beauty which America has made to the world. If you have any bit of love for music, for poetry, for imaginative conceptions of a high order, you cannot fail to receive many years of happiness from these songs. If you can afford only one of the books, by all means get Mr. Johnson's; if you can get them both, you will never regret either purchase.

---

The Book of American Negro Spirituals. Edited with an Introduction by James Weldon Johnson. Musical Arrangements by J. Rosamond Johnson. Additional Numbers by Lawrence Brown. The Viking Press.

Mellows: Negro Work Songs, Street Cries and Spirituals. By R. Emmet Kennedy. Albert and Charles Boni.

## GENERAL BULLARD SPEAKS

By Shipley Thomas

DURING the last seven years, the world has been assailed with a mighty array of books written by the leaders in the great war. Unhappily, these have been written, for the most part, by the unsuccessful who have rushed into print to explain how they were right and all the others were wrong. Germany produced the first crop with Moltke, Kluck, Bülow, Hausen, the Crown Prince, Falkenhayn, Hindenburg, and Ludendorff. England followed with French, Townshend, and Esher's book on Kitchener. France has produced fewer, perhaps because of less failure, but Lanrezac is an example. In America we have been spared from books, but General Edwards has clamored for "justice".

How refreshing therefore to pick up General Bullard's "Personalities of the War". An infantry colonel on the Mexican Border, he was ordered to join the first expedition. It is pleasant to read, between the lines, of one success after another which carried him from

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the command of a Brigade to a Division, to a Corps, and finally as a lieutenant general to the command of the Second Army, where, with the famous Mangin, he began the assault on the fortress of Metz, only to be halted by the armistice.

Without an ax to grind, with no wrongs to right, but merely as a narrator of the personalities, the events, and the national difficulties encountered, General Bullard recounts his experiences in the war. Frank and to the point, sparing no one either in criticism or praise, he tells of the war as he saw it. And surely there are few in the American army who saw more or had as rich a background by which to judge. He had taken part in all the service that fell to American troops from 1885 until 1919, was a graduate of West Point, the Post Schools, School of the Line, and the Army War College; and in the administration of territory, not many could equal his record.

Mention of the training camps brings to mind Leonard Wood. It was while fighting in the Geronimo campaign in 1885 that these two first met. There follows a charming sketch of General Wood. Other sketches appear as the men's names are mentioned: Tasker Bliss, Newton Baker, Generals Sibert, James McAndrew, H. B. Fiske, Clarence Edwards, Liggett, Dickman, Hines, Cronkheit, Lassiter, and Colonel House, together with Pétain, Foch, Clemenceau, Debeney, Degoutte, and Nivelle of France. The high spots, with a chapter to each, are reserved for the two most remarkable men of the A. E. F. — Pershing, the C. in C., whom Bullard knew from West Point days, and Summerall, the genius of successful battles, who rose in a year from a lieutenant colonel to a Corps commander, and is today the senior General of the Army.

With equal candor General Bullard tells of the failure of the Italians, the Fifth British Army, the fiasco of Negro troops, the smashing of the control by the Quartermaster Corps of the army, and the changing French attitude toward the Americans during the two years. In so doing he has raised a storm of criticism which has made his book famous overnight.

This volume is not a history of the American troops in the war. Nor is it the usual attempt at self justification. It gives to all the opportunity to listen to General Bullard as he tells of the personalities and problems he met in the war.

---

Personalities and Reminiscences of the War
By Robert Lee Bullard. Doubleday Page and Company.

## NORSE AMERICA IN FICTION

By Karsten Roedder

DURING the past few years, America has been subjected to the innovation of Scandinavian literature *en masse*. Following the publication of Johan Bojer's "The Great Hunger" approximately five years ago, Knut Hamsun, Johannes V. Jensen, Sigrid Undset, Martin Andersen-Nexö, and half a dozen minor writers, such as Frank Heller, have been sufficiently exploited to establish a market value for the literature of the North.

The entire population of Norway corresponds in number to that of Brooklyn. There are as many Norwegians — first and second generation — in America, as there are in Norway. Although not generally recognized, a Norse-American literature actually exists, centred about the middle west. It is a curious literature, with a pro-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nounced flair for mediocrity. It is stripped of originality. It is painfully superficial. It is sentimental, false, humiliating. The literati of Norway treat it with manifest contempt.

For years, ever since the present reviewer became acquainted with Norse-American literature, he has looked forward to the publication of such a work as "Wild Geese". It is a book which eventually would have had to appear. That it happens to be written in English, and not in Norwegian, matters but little. "Wild Geese" is as much part of this Norse-American literature as it is of native American writing. Caleb Gare of this novel is as definitely a Scandinavian as is the author, though Miss Ostenso in no way reveals his nationality. In fact, "Wild Geese" is the intrinsic climax of the Norse-American literature. As a contribution to the immigrant belles lettres of America it is equally important. It is a first novel and a prize novel — and it is written by a woman of twenty five.

The scene is laid in a Scandinavian settlement in the northern middle west; the theme is one that has been attempted time and again by various Norse-American writers. It has likewise been approached by Americans, such as Willa Cather and Bernice Brown. However, "Wild Geese" is the first authentic gallery of Scandinavians — from the Scandinavian point of view — to appear in English.

Caleb Gare is a prosperous farmer of Oeland, whose passion for the soil degenerates into greed and insanity. Amelia, Caleb's wife, is the mother of a neighboring "hired man", an architect farming for his health. The author has twisted this son into a mechanical devise used by Caleb to establish himself as undisputed master of the Gare household. It is an artifice which in no way jars the reader, though one feels it detracts from Miss Ostenso's art. However, it must be admitted that seldom has melodrama been used to better advantage. The course of events appears probable — even genuine.

"The Emigrants", by Johan Bojer, is a counterpart of Miss Ostenso's novel, extraneously a climax of the Norse-American immigrant literature. Bojer has attempted a parallel to "Growth of the Soil", and failed. His novel is a curious work, to be viewed from several angles. The first may be termed "hamsunesque". Bojer is no Hamsun, though it is reported that he has accorded Hamsun considerable amusement upon several occasions — one of which was the appearance of "The Emigrants".

Following the publication of "Growth of the Soil", the initiated expectantly awaited announcement of a Bojer epic. Just what would be the procedure this time? The Norse-American Centennial at hand, Bojer two years ago visited America. The opening of the Centennial marked also the publication of "Vor Egen Stamme" (The Emigrants). An enormous public greeted the book instantly.

The story concerns a handful of people who, transplanted to the American frontier, till the soil and establish a community. The subject matter offers unlimited possibilities. In fact, it knows no boundaries. The Old World and the New are involved: an international scene of enormous proportions. Bojer, as a capable dramatic story teller, accustomed to international scenes, should be especially equipped for the task of writing this particular novel. Yet he has failed. He has limited himself to the European point of view: he presents the spectacle of a disinterested Norwegian objec-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tively observing the American saga. The close association with the soil which establishes the genuine artistry of Hamsun's epic is sporadic, affected, and as a whole lost. Essentially, the theme meant nothing to the author, beyond the opportunity afforded to turn out a novel of exceptional interest. It is in no way part of Bojer's personality.

Bojer, as well as Miss Ostenso, has rescued a captivating theme from the morass of the Norse-American literature.

---

Wild Geese. By Martha Ostenso. Dodd, Mead and Company.
The Emigrants. By Johan Bojer. Translated by A. G. Jayne. The Century Company.

## A CHRISTMAS INVENTORY

By Louis Untermeyer

THE position of Witter Bynner is one of the most puzzling in contemporary American poetry. His work is definite in its values, straightforward in speech, clean cut in technique, undeviatingly sincere in the expression of his convictions. His intentions are as directly and sympathetically registered as those of any of his compatriots, the subject matter of his verse is far more varied and inclusive than that of most living poets. What is it, then, that prevents Bynner from being ranked among the leaders? Why does one miss that indefinable but unmistakable note which lifts the most agreeable poeticizing into poetry? For one thing, Bynner's Muse is too loquacious a lady; she seems to lack any talent for suppression; every bright thing, every æsthetic departure, every good or bad cause, evokes not only her interest (which is as it should be) but a running and, too frequently, superficial commentary. For another thing, Bynner's compositions are, well, somewhat too insistent and a few too many; he has embraced movements with so great a zeal that much of his verse is burdened with propaganda and polemics. In "Not Only Swords" Bynner ruefully admits this; in "A Considered Farewell to Politics" the declaration is more decided. But these are the mistakes of an eager, exuberant nature; Bynner's limitations as a poet lie in deeper ground. It is in the tone of his verse, in the very texture of his phrasing, that the author of "Caravan" reveals his inability to rise beyond his subject. He floats upon the surface of his themes, skims gracefully above its miniature crests, poises himself for the deferred leap into the breathless air of ecstasy. Yet, for all his dips and side springs, he never makes his readers gasp — we wait for the sudden lark-like ascent, but Bynner remains warbling on familiar and much plowed earth. His imagination is bright but seldom bold; his versatility, seeking the heights, cannot disguise the essentially prosaic levels at which it arrives. At the best, lyrics like "A Young Girl", "Pallor", and "The Singing Huntsman" are edged with a firm line; anger at impersonal cruelties forces him to a personal outcry as in "The Old Men and the Young Men":

Said the old men to the young men,
"Who will take arms to be free?"
Said the young men to the old men,
"We."

Said the old men to the young men,
"It is finished. You may go."
Said the young men to the old men,
"No."

Said the old men to the young men,
"What is there left to do?"
Said the young men to the old men,
"You."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But the greater part of "Caravan" can increase neither its author's stature nor his following. What is most winning about this work is the warm emanation given off by the least of the verses; one wishes that one could like the poetry of Witter Bynner as much as one is attracted by his spirit.

Something of the same sort, in a lesser degree, might be said of Struthers Burt's offering. The author, better and more deservedly known as a novelist, is a talented craftsman in verse. But he is little more. "When I Grew Up to Middle Age" contains no heresies of form or emotion, nor does it reveal anything fresh in feeling or particular in expression. Struthers Burt responds to the usual thing in the usual way: he observes that rivers are pleasant to loiter along, that music is a magic medicine, that "Beauty presides in loveliness of little things", that war is not an agreeable diversion — and he says so in adequate if not startling rhyme. He writes with a great deal of verve and practically no poetic sensibility. Infrequently he achieves an image as clear as:

Bend the soft air, O curving swallows, bend
Until the evening shows a luminous arc.

But this is rare. Burt's Pegasus imagines it is cleaving the empyrean when it is merely pawing the ground of crumbled "poeticisms".

Nor does Mr. Burt's lengthy introduction manage to say anything new about poetry, modern or classic. One hopes it was a self ironic afterthought which led him to subtitle it "Ancient Gossip".

Lew Sarett has made two or three leaps and several good strides since "Many, Many Moons". As in the first volume and its successor, "The Box of God", the outstanding sections are those which reflect the half savage, half influenced thought and action of the American Indian. Sarett has so identified himself with his backgrounds that his lines are full of native flutes and gourd rattles even when it is the poet and not the Redman speaking. He is by no means the first in the field; he has been preceded by such devoted workers as Natalie Curtis Burlin, Mary Austin, and Constance Lindsay Skinner. But Sarett, as guide and ranger in remote districts, has lived closer to his characters than any woman could, and has been far more successful in capturing the changes in pitch and tempo, the sudden ejaculations, the swoopings and cries which are almost all there is still living of our aborigines.

Yet he is something more than a lusty translator. In "Slow Smoke" he emerges as a poet in his own right. "Feud" is marked by an intensity that is as vivid as it is racial; "Four Little Foxes" is a lyric that is tender without a trace of mawkishness; "To a Wild Goose over Decoys" sounds a personal excitement beneath its transparent symbolism. Sarett's growth is manifest on almost every page of his latest collection — perhaps most surprising of all is his new control of satire as evidenced in so condensed an epitaph as:

REQUIEM FOR A MODERN CRŒSUS

To him the moon was a silver dollar, spun
Into the sky by some mysterious hand; the sun
Was a gleaming golden coin—
His to purloin;
The freshly minted stars were dimes of delight
Flung out upon the counter of the night.

In yonder room he lies,
With pennies on his eyes.

With "Tiger Joy" Stephen Vincent Benét makes a double bid for popular favor and poetic esteem, this being (there can be few dissenting voices) his most seasoned as well as his most

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vigorous work. The latter quality is not a recently acquired gift — Stephen Benét, in company with his brother William, always gave his readers good measure when it came to verbal vivacity, the clash of resonant couplets, the ringing shock of rhyme against rhyme. But up to now the younger Benét has allowed his energy to take the reins; the result, too frequently, was a runaway poem in which the author, no longer in control, contributed little besides high spirits and a higher voice. "Tiger Joy" is a great advance; it has all the former *élan* plus a canny restraint. If there is any recent American ballad more rousing and memorable than "The Mountain Whippoorwill" or "The Ballad of William Sycamore" it has not come to this reviewer's notice. And, though the poet's natural facility which carries his ballads on with such a sweep tends to make his sober-serious poems less distinctive, the eight poems grouped under "The Golden Corpse" should do much to remove the proverbial prejudice against the sonnet sequence. Were there room, it would be pleasant to list a dozen of Stephen Benét's curious conceits; there is, alas, scarcely sufficient space to call attention to the quaintness of his epithets and the crisp gracefulness of his tributes to Rosemary.

Léonie Adams's advent will be, unless all signs are worthless, one of the events of the year; it will need neither drums nor proclamations to awaken the most torpid reader to the hushed and almost silent ecstasy of "Those Not Elect". Some of Miss Adams's metaphysical stanzas are difficult first reading; there are times, indeed, when the thinker seems dazzled by her own clarities. But, for all her evasions of reality, these poems open on a translated world; they are a set of windows revealing transfigured heavens and landscapes lovelier than our own. Where Miss Adams fails she fails only because her emotion aims too high for her expression; where she succeeds (and "Midsummer", "Death and the Lady", "April Mortality", "Prelude Pastoral", and the title poem are a few of the conspicuous successes) she reaches a level rarely attained by the most sensitive singers of our day. In spite of her reticent and almost withheld communications, whatever her future, Miss Adams is already among those elect.

---

Caravan. By Witter Bynner. Alfred A. Knopf.
When I Grew Up to Middle Age. By Struthers Burt. Charles Scribner's Sons.
Slow Smoke. By Lew Sarett. Henry Holt and Company.
Tiger Joy. By Stephen Vincent Benét. George H. Doran Company.
Those Not Elect. By Léonie Adams. Robert M. McBride and Company.

## SOME AMERICAN WORTHIES

By Gerald Hewes Carson

AS long ago as 1837 Emerson, addressing the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Cambridge, said, "Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions, that around us are rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests. Events, actions arise, that must be sung, that will sing themselves."

Don Seitz's "Uncommon Americans" who without conforming succeeded in some sense or other, are a selection from Emerson's millions, though Mr. Seitz is not precisely bardic. Some of these Americans, to be sure, had already run their course before Emerson rose to declare our intellectual independence.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Most of them performed their appointed tasks long after he spoke. But few of them were alive when our own generation, fine flower of civilization, came on to grace the Republic.

It is our own interest in dead Americans, whether great or small, of whatever faith, work, color, or complexion, that is now worthy of note. It is that interest which makes possible such an effort in native biography as Mr. Seitz offers. Being already amply self sufficient in material and political matters, being intellectually self sufficient, the indigenous American is developing a sense of history, of social heritage, of the riches of human nature yet to be mined on this continent.

Mr. Seitz makes a short essay upon twenty two characters, all of whom, as indicated above, achieved "unconventional success". The names of all should be rehearsed — how many of the twenty two do you know? — Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, Martin Scott, Lord Timothy Dexter, Peter Cartwright, Charles Grandison Finney, Israel Putnam, Nathan Bedford Forrest, John S. Mosby, Susan B. Anthony, Red Jacket, Tecumseh (Americans "native" enough!), George Francis Train, Ethan Allen, James Abbott McNeil Whistler, Edmund Fanning, John Ledyard, Hinton Rowan Helper, Henry George, Mary Baker Glover Eddy, Edwin Forrest, and David Crockett.

While Mr. Seitz appends no bibliography or citation of authority, surmising perhaps that public interest in American incunabula is still too delicate to support the cool breezes of scholarship, it is evident that he has relied to a great extent upon source material — Captain Marryat's "Diary", Lord Timothy's curious "A Pickle for the Knowing Ones", the autobiographies of Cartwright, Trair Allen, Crockett, and so forth. M Seitz's presentation is neither erudite nor based upon a trick style. He writes in easy narrative fashion, with the briefest exordium pointing out the significance of what is to follow.

Concerning Peter Cartwright he begins: "For half a century before the outbreak of the War between the States, Americans took their religion like their whiskey — straight." Concerning John Ledyard he begins in completely matter of fact fashion: "John Ledyard was the son of a sea captain in the West India trade, who died young, leaving his family destitute."

And so, for all the wealth of material enclosed between the covers of this book, one cannot but wonder whether Mr. Seitz may not be gravely at fault in indulging himself — as he most assuredly does — in such a very easy, facile, journalistic manner. His narrative is mainly factual, sometimes anecdotal. But he does not seem to have tried, or at any rate to have succeeded, in penetrating imaginatively into other days, other ways.

In fact his style, while pleasantly free from affectation and excess, saunters on in pedestrian fashion at times when one wishes ardently for a brisker stride. Surely he could be equable without being so solemn, lively without being false to fact. The high art which he practises demands that the material and the biographer be fused utterly. Had Mr. Seitz achieved this fusion, "Uncommon Americans", which is a good book because its material is so good, might have been a distinguished one.

---

Uncommon Americans. By Don C. Seitz. The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THE EDITOR RECOMMENDS—

BOOKS THAT MAY HAVE ESCAPED YOU

*1. "The Moonstone" by Wilkie Collins — a mystery story that defies comparison.*

*2. "The Everlasting Mercy" by John Masefield — one of the great poems of our time.*

*3. "Raw Material" by Dorothy Canfield — sketches that show admirably how a novelist works.*

*4. "Earth Moods" by Hervey Allen — striking poems by a young American poet.*

*5. "The Gadfly" by E. L. Voynich — a splendid and memorable novel.*

IN "Aaron Burr" (Putnam), written in collaboration with Samuel H. Wandell, Meade Minnigerode again demonstrates his ability to present a period with decisive charm, and characters with color and conviction. It is a biography which is from first to last readable. It presents one of the most complex of our historical figures, one of the most picturesque of periods, with insight and a mass of illuminating and graphic detail. The admirers of Hamilton will be somewhat astounded by some of Mr. Minnigerode's deductions. The book will undoubtedly cause much discussion. Carefully documented though it is, based on years of research by Mr. Wandell and additional investigation by Mr. Minnigerode, there will be goings backward and forward, sideways and across, in this matter. The fact remains, however, that in this book an attempt is made to estimate Aaron Burr with neither passion nor partizanship. To one who knows little of history it seems a fascinating and a clear minded performance. Certainly, it is a distinguished contribution to the field of American biography, and places Minnigerode definitely as one who can not only reconstruct a period dramatically, as in "The Fabulous Forties", but can undertake and execute a work of weight and importance. Scenes of beauty and violence are pictured in these two luxurious volumes. One of the most successful portions is the vivid description of Burr in his old age, at once searching and pitying. The famous duel is in some ways the focal point of the biography. I take the liberty of quoting a paragraph which is probably inflammatory:

> There arose consequently — and has endured ever since — a sentimental tradition concerning this duel which has set it apart as though it had not been a perfectly normal personal encounter such as occurred constantly in America throughout that era and for many years to come. It is not a question of the propriety of duelling as an institution; at the time concerned it was the accepted and natural method of settling controversies between gentlemen, and a rigorous and enthusiastic practice of the custom was not, some twenty-five years later, to keep Andrew Jackson from the presidential chair. It seems, therefore, somewhat impertinent to criticize Colonel Burr for having aimed at and shot his man under circumstances involving, as far as he had any reason to suppose, a similar risk to himself. As for Mr. Hamilton, one cannot, somehow, muster any great degree of admiration for the adversary who accepts conditions which he is not disposed to perform. Colonel Burr was at Weehawken that morning to be shot at by Mr. Hamilton, not to profit from his embarrassing generosity. The duelling code was very strict on this point; the field of honor was a place of scrupulously equal opportunity and peril, of genuine conflict between two men, not a shooting gallery in which one or the other might secure a fortuitous immortal-



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ity by means of a suicidal sacrifice. The forcing upon an opponent of so distressing and damning a favor might well be considered an insulting and pernicious charity.

Gamaliel Bradford's new collection of psychographs, "Wives" (Harper), is particularly interesting in this connection because it contains a portrait, and a remarkable one, of Theodosia Burr. Mr. Bradford's abilities are mellowing. These sketches, in my opinion, are among the very best he has done. His method is more concerned as a rule with the psychological than is Mr. Minnigerode's. Yet in his piece on Dolly Madison, I feel that he has done a masterpiece. It not only pictures the delightful if somewhat simple Dolly, but may stand as a character study of all women of her type. In fact, this book, though treating particular women, is in reality a study of womankind. Since Mr. Bradford's attitude on Burr differs somewhat from that taken by Wandell and Minnigerode, it will be interesting to note a paragraph from his estimate of Theodosia:

> And then one thinks of the man as history sees him. To Americans in general to-day he is simply one branded with eternal ignominy and with the mark of Cain upon his forehead. In the most charitable view, it must be admitted that, while he may have liked to see people happy, he made many people wretched. He ran a wild, disordered career, with little spiritual guide except his own whim and the passionate fancy of the moment, with little real regard to whom or what he sacrificed. And if sexual morals have any social significance whatever, he was certainly an abominable reprobate. Worse still, as it would have appeared to him, and possibly to Theodosia, he was not only a bad man, he was a small man. By a petty love of mystery and disguise, by a constitutional incapacity for living with great purposes, he managed to give to even vast designs a perpetual flavor of comic opera. The little things of life were just as important to him as the big, and while such a disposition may not be fatal to happiness, it surely is to greatness. Yet this superb woman, with an intellect as keen as her character was lofty, made an idol of him.

A clear statement from Mr. Bradford's introductory "Confessions of a Biographer" seems appropriate:

> When we come to a man's testimony about himself, we have to deal either with spoken words recorded by others, or with his own actual writing. The first source of information is obviously of great importance, but must be used with extreme caution. History and biography are full of quoted sayings, and these are often so pregnant and suggestive that the temptation to employ them is almost irresistible. Yet we must remember that they are seldom taken down on the spot, are usually recorded from memory a considerable time after they were uttered, and often by persons whose memory is anything but trained to exactitude. It is rare that any of us can reproduce his own words after a few hours' interval, rare indeed that we can reproduce another's. Yet writers of diaries and letters will set down long conversations in quotations marks, and these are repeated and handed on in history as an exact record of the utterance of celebrated persons, when the said celebrated persons would probably disown a large part of them in disgust. The Goncourts were most carefully trained and disciplined observers and listeners; yet Renan and others declared that their conversations, as recorded in the Goncourts' Journal, belied them utterly.

### *A Work of Love*

TO "Kate Douglas Wiggin as Her Sister Knew Her" (Houghton Mifflin) I send you with the assurance that it is a volume conceived and executed in love. It presents a remarkable woman in a remarkable light. It is written by Nora Archibald Smith, whose life was intertwined with that of Mrs. Riggs in unusual sisterly affection. There is pathos in this book, and humor, and a great many incidents of charm and infectious gaiety. No one who knew Mrs. Riggs can write of her, or of anything about her, in a spirit of criticism; and anyone who knew her or

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her books will find another volume to treasure in this of her sister. The words she wrote herself, that she wished said of herself, give the woman, and this book, in a way that nothing else could:

> What she had she gave gladly — hoping it might somehow please, or help, those who had less. If it was little, at least she tried to multiply and fructify it by use; but were it little, or much, she wanted to show her worthiness to possess, by proving herself willing to serve.

### *Souls of Women and Business*

WITH what disturbing clarity Frank Swinnerton can detail the development of love and passion, and the pain and despair of jealousy. "The Elder Sister" (Doran) is in some ways a better, a fuller book than "Nocturne". The simple story of Anne, Vera, and Mortimer becomes as absorbing as a thriller. Two sisters, totally different in character, loving each other, find themselves in love with the same man. It is impossible to describe this story in detail. Its development in irony and force is superbly handled. The contrast of two passions, so like, yet so different in feeling and effect, is masterly. The background, too, although it is subordinated, is not neglected, and the characters of father and mother, employees and office stenographers, are brilliantly drawn in. Mortimer is certainly not a young gentleman of strong character, but he is real; and as always, Swinnerton's women give an impression of absolute, almost frightening veracity. Who is there that writes of the emotions of simple people with equal drama and power? Moreover, in choosing simple people about whom to write, Swinnerton is able to catch raw emotion, and to show it in startling fashion — raw emotion that, although it has universality, is hidden under the surface among the more sophisticated. Moreover, he never criticizes his characters. Here are three people caught into a storm of feeling and event. What they do is the inevitable result of their gifts from life and the workings of chance. He leaves the reader to be the judge. He gives us the innermost workings of the human soul.

In "The Office" (Harcourt, Brace), Nathan Asch has attempted to portray the innermost workings of business minds. This experimental story is filled with faults but it is well worth reading; at times it becomes really fine. " . . . and then one day the office failed . . ." From this point Mr. Asch proceeds with a series of character sketches, swiftly drawn portraits of the effect of a Wall Street bankruptcy on the lives of those employed in the office, of those who ran it. He is bitter, he has a sense of humor, he allows his people, in the main, to speak for themselves. It is only the man who is responsible for the failure who triumphs in the face of difficulty; but the author does not allow him to show for an instant that he has a heart. A striking idea, written by a man who has force of presentation and, occasionally, distinction of style.

### *Sweetness Slightly Salted*

THE reissue of James Stephens's novel "Mary, Mary" as "The Charwoman's Daughter" (Macmillan) brings again to attention a light, sometimes annoyingly wistful, but always legitimately fanciful romance. It is an Irish Cinderella presented in beautiful prose. It is James Stephens, free of

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

annoying Irish expressions, writing the old story with zestful gladness, quite free from apology for its oldness, or self consciousness in the face of possible sentimentality.

Of John Oxenham's "The Hidden Years" (Longmans, Green) I am not so sure. It is a reverent, and at times remarkably lovely presentation of the life of Christ through the eyes of a boyhood friend. Yet, written for children, it should perhaps not be so definitely presented as a novel. It will be read, it is true, with pleasure by many older persons, and it has distinct merits; but when put over against Don Marquis, John Masefield, and other recent dramatizations and lives of Jesus, it does seem rather sentimental. Yet it is perhaps unfair to Mr. Oxenham to expect him to treat a subject so fraught with danger in a way beyond criticism. Then, too, the reader must remember also that the method is one which makes for an overlaying of sentiment. Azor, the friend, who sees in Jesus not only his hero but his God, is naturally led to extravagance. On the whole, this book is successful. If I have seemed to treat it carpingly, it is only because the subject is so great that only the greatest of poets could do it justice.

### *A New Poe*

THE "Edgar Allan Poe Letters Till Now Unpublished", edited by Mary Newton Stanard of Richmond (Lippincott), form one of the most beautiful and the most important additions to the year's literature about literature. They are luxuriously printed and bound, with illustrations and with facsimiles of all the letters. They make up a book that should be in every library in the country. Slowly a new Poe is emerging from the shadows of legend, a Poe whose character seems to be less enveloped in shadow. Mrs. Stanard's own "The Dreamer", now reissued (Lippincott), presented this Poe to us in some facets. Within the year we shall have Joseph Wood Krutch's critical work on the southern poet, and Hervey Allen's biographical "Israfel: the Romance of Edgar Allan Poe". Meanwhile, these letters, presented without passionate interpretation according to the request of the Valentine Museum which owns them, give us pretty clearly the character of Poe's foster father, Mr. Allan, and the reasons for their estrangement. It is evident that Mr. Allan, although amply supplied with funds himself, kept Poe in a constant state of penury and, although Poe's financial habits were far from perfect, censured him over strongly and for reasons which have not heretofore appeared to the public. Seldom have the letters of any literary man, so made public, given chance for a revision of character estimate like this. It is true they are of interest factually rather than as products of the letter writing art, for they deal in the main with business affairs or personal difficulties. Mrs. Stanard has done a loving and an excellent piece of work in the editing, and it is to be hoped that those who do not know "The Dreamer" will be led to it now; for she is one of the few writers combining a love of southern lore with a charming style and a genius for research.

### *Fledgling Versifiers*

IT is scarcely fair to term Countee Cullen and Nathalia Crane fledglings; for although neither is far ad-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vanced in years — Mr. Cullen being just out of high school and Miss Crane being still a child — both of them write with accents of maturity. The doubting have discovered matter for speculation in the question of the authenticity of little Miss Crane's poetry. They have found the sophisticated accents of her poems strange as the lispings of a short-skirted maiden. To the best of my belief Miss Crane writes her own verses and is a child prodigy. It would not matter greatly were this not so, for the poems stand by themselves. "Lava Lane" (Seltzer), her new volume, is a better book than "The Janitor's Boy". It may be that the lyric notes do not warble so freshly, but they have achieved an even greater cleverness. She is commencing not only to feel the wonder of the world but to understand its bitternesses. Surely there is iron and utter disgust in the section called "Fame". There has been no poem so downright virulent concerning the late war as "The Liars". Miss Crane has not, however, lost the old magic that characterized her earlier poems. The last section of the book, "Plumes", is filled with grace and harmony. I am going to take the liberty of quoting three stanzas of a five stanza poem called "The Edict". Out of the mouths of babes —

Write, said the editor unto the saint,
Something all dripping with paradise paint,
Something to jazzle and dazzle and please,
Something of kneeling and beautiful knees.

You write the story and I'll write the head,
Margin to margin the copy we'll spread —
Never a blue pencil fussing a sheet —
We'll make a story to sling at the street. . . .

Make it as coarse as a cobblestone fight,
Make it as sweet as an old man's delight,
Put in the pallor and strawberry stain
So they will read it — and read it again.

Countee Cullen's "Color" (Harper) is a passionate, eager book, filled with lyrics that burn and cry out with love and anguish:

Yet do I marvel at this curious thing:
To make a poet black, and bid him sing!

It is the poetry of a boy, wondering at life that brings him such a difficult problem, yet enjoying life too with hearty, sure accents. The love poems are frankly and lustily vigorous. The poetic discussions of race problems are emotional but they also have a cerebral restraint. Countee Cullen is an excellent poet, and he has a theme which gives him courage and originality. His phrases are occasionally amateurish, but at best they are fine and flowing. This is a book, then, of more than usual interest, of more than promise; a book for the lover of poetry and the student of sociology.

— *J. F.*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# IN BRIEF REVIEW

MARIE SALTUS, in her extremely intimate and sometimes scandalously frank biography of her husband, "Edgar Saltus: The Man" (Covici), has, as the title indicates, dealt rather with the personal history and peculiarities of her subject than with his literary works. As a study of supersensitive genius in the home, the portrait is one to strike terror into the minds of those who prefer a quiet life. At the same time it is clearly recognizable as that of a not uncommon auctorial type. Mr. Saltus's screamings on occasion, his fainting and fibs, obsessions and phobias, are only a part of the picture, yet they crowd the foreground by reason of their spectacular quality. Always readably, Mrs. Saltus tells of her husband's many love affairs, from simple Maudie to a semi-royal maiden, his wives — the author being his third — and his writing career until he ceased to create — "when", as she put it, "Theosophy had done its work for him". The family baby language, imitated from Mrs. Saltus's talk with her animal pets, may be illustrated by Mr. Saltus's griefstricken outburst when Mowgy-Puss (his wife) is about to go abroad: "Miaw! Wow! Wow! Poor Snippsy goes crazy. O Wowsy wee! Wowsy wee!" Pathos enters with the account of Edgar Saltus's pain racked last years. A rather astonishing book this. Candor is its great virtue.

What Grantchester was to Rupert Brooke, the town of Montacute was, and always will be, to Llewellyn Powys. Through the long night at a sanitorium, high in the frozen Alps at Davos Platz, there was in the back of his mind a bright picture of leafy elms and hedgerows and the green fields of England. Then when the skies cleared, there was the poignant joy of a long anticipated homecoming; then many a morning walk with brothers John and Theodore, and good talk and the quaffing of ale at roadside taverns. The body responded to the warm suns and gentle twilights of an English summer, a philosophy born of the simple ritual of daily living was food for the mind, the spirit quickened, yet the battle was not won. After Christmas, there was a return to the Engadine and to the endless monotony of white sheets, with the old taste of mortality in the throat. Now that Mr. Powys has lived to explore the Dark Continent and to hear the sounds of "black laughter" in the African veldt, we are just that much more certain of the ultimate rewards of courage. Still, if the path had not been strewn with thorns, the world would be the poorer — "Skin for Skin" (Harcourt, Brace), a journal of these months with their Elysian interlude, would be in the limbo of unwritten books.

On the second page of "The Gay City" (Brentano) Arthur Phillips says that Paris can always be enjoyed by those who have understanding and temperament. Right here we suspect it, and at the last page we are sure of it — that Mr. Phillips has both "understanding and temperament". We should like to have a cognac with him at the Café du Dome or follow his footsteps through the beckoning streets of Montmartre just before dawn. In fact



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

we would almost be willing to let him lead us by the hand through the maelstrom of taxis in front of the Opera, so complete is our confidence. At any rate we shall slip his small volume into our pocket before our next trip, because it more deftly pierces the very heart of Paris than any of the so called guide-books we have seen in many a day. Mr. Phillips is an English journalist who lives in the Latin Quarter; he knows a Paris which most tourists look for and few find. It does not revolve about the Place Vendôme or the Rue de Rivoli, nor is it confined to the Left Bank. It has a great deal to do with atmosphere and depends somewhat on one's imagination and point of view. Disarming the critical reader at the outset, Mr. Phillips explains:

> For pure sight-seeing I leave you to the tender mercies of the conventional guide-book and your own artistic comprehension. No words of mine, or, for that matter, any man's, can make you appreciate, say, Notre Dame. If you have even the slightest taste for beautiful architecture you will stand in reverent awe as you face this famous cathedral; if you are not thrilled, not all the elegies in the world will help you. With the life of Paris, it is different; you may be the most receptive person in the world and yet find it difficult, especially if your stay is short, to get in touch with the tide of romance, adventure, and Bohemian gaiety that runs below the surface. The spirit of Paris, like the spirit of any other great city, is an ephemeral thing. The following chapters are the net in which I hope to capture at least a part of that great spirit.

Would that all those who spread nets laid them below the surface and were as well rewarded when pulling them in.

Those persons — and they are legion — whose preference in household color schemes runs largely to the cruder shades of red, green, or what have you, and whose ideas on wall paper are limited to the conventional poison ivy pattern or an infinity of spiders running amuck, will learn something to their advantage in Lucy D. Taylor's handsome and useful manual of interior decoration, "Your Home Beautiful" (Doran). The two opening chapters comprise so persuasive an account of first principles that even those not particularly sensitive to spectrum tones will find themselves well on the way toward a practical appreciation of such problems as light adjustment, accents, and balanced composition in their bearing on immediate needs. The third will set the backward reader dreaming of such historic papers as toile effects and Renaissance ogival forms and eighteenth century chinoiserie, perhaps to buying with discretion such staples as plain and mottled "blends", flat "all-overs", landscapes and tapestries. Paint, woodwork, floors, and draperies receive special attention, as do the various styles and types in furnishing. Intended as a guide to common sense arrangement and buying for those homes where the amateur works without benefit of a professional decorator, this volume admirably fulfils its purpose. Miss Taylor is an artist and an expert, but it may be noted that she writes primarily of the home as a potentially pleasant centre of family activities rather than as an exhibition of correct taste or its opposite. The illustrations include color charts, diagrams, and many photographs.

The publishers maintain that William Lyon Phelps ranks Alexandre Kuprin among the greatest of the Russians. After reading "Gambrinus and Other Stories" (Adelphi) we conclude that Professor Phelps's judgment is not based on this book alone. The title is a misnomer. Aside from "Gambrinus", which is little more than an impressionistic sketch, we find a character study, a "travelogue", a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

piece of descriptive realism, and a fifth "story" which might fall into any of these categories. Yet there is none of the finesse of Chekhov or the artistry of Katherine Mansfield, into whose domain these fragmentary sketches appear to trespass. They reveal, however, an acute observation and a certain dexterity along stylistic lines which carries the reader on in spite of himself. The volume undoubtedly suffers in translation.

Lewis Melville, the English essayist and historian, in his recent biography "Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Her Life and Letters (1689–1762)" (Houghton Mifflin), has chosen for his subject one of the most brilliant and celebrated women of her time. Her talents with the pen, which she exercised industriously, and on occasion vindictively, won her the admiration as well as the ill will of her eminent contemporaries. Mr. Melville's volume is composed in great part of selections from the lady's letters which clearly illuminate her own life in relation to her family, her friends, her enemies, her environment; and give her impressions of the commanding literary, political, and social lights with whom she mingled, and of her extensive travels and long residence abroad.

A colossal task is before "The Isles of Wisdom" by Alexander Moszkowski (Dutton). It seeks to discuss both the abstract and the concrete, it undertakes to ally imaginative speculation with deductive reasoning, and plainly acknowledges its purpose — to "entertain and at the same time start new currents of thought". The result is a hybrid; Sir Thomas More is poor company for Swift and Rabelais, and Gulliver does not seem at home in Utopia. Mr. Moszkowski's imagination supplies him with the setting — "a large group of islands hitherto undiscovered in the South Seas" — and here he finds, among others, a "Platonic Island", an "Island of Perversions", a "Mechanized Island", and an "Island of Fine Arts", where men instead of chasing the will-o'-the-wisp of ideals have caught the elusive creature, and attempt to try out their theories. The situations which arise allow the author ample opportunity for satire. His conclusion seems to be that "no principle can be put into practice", for "every principle is bound to break down somewhere, or, if enforced, it is transformed into a caricature of itself".

Leo Crane, author of "Indians of the Enchanted Desert" (Little, Brown), is a former superintendent of the Hopi and Navajo Indian Reservation in the Arizona desert. He occupied the post for many years, intimately understanding and capably managing the primitive folk in his care. His reminiscences concerning their racial characteristics, their customs and life, make an exceedingly interesting and instructive volume. Mr. Crane writes a prose of mature lucidity and distinction not frequently met with in the mass of books broadly termed "Description and Travel". The text is illustrated by more than fifty crystal-clear photographs of the region and its inhabitants.

There are two dominant overtones which hum suspiciously whenever one mentions Ferdinand Ossendowski. First, that once in Europe he dangerously admitted that much of his material was not first hand; second, that he is a Pole, and therefore unable to write in an unbiased way regarding Russia and the Russians. Nevertheless, his book "From President to Prison"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(Dutton) is a most engrossing volume, and most of the facts concerning the Russo-Japanese War have, unfortunately for Russian prestige, been amply verified. After the Revolution of 1905, Ossendowski became president of the Russian Far Eastern Republic, only to be dramatically imprisoned later. Graphic and harrowing descriptions of prison conditions abound. After his liberation Ossendowski wrote a romance which proved such an arraignment of the Czarist régime that every volume was burned. Copies of the second edition were placed upon the desks of every member of the Duma, who then forced the government to institute reforms in prison life. It is a stirring and interesting work, even after one has added the skeptic's grain of salt.

The romanticist as historian is rather a new development in the literary world. He is a product of the movement toward mass education; the aim of his work is, besides the primary one of bread and butter and buttons, the making of dull history interesting. To do that, it has been found necessary to embroider on facts, to tint dull sequences, to spice such tasteless things as royal marriages and movements of armies. And that such additions detract little or nothing from the value historically of the events is proved by a recent book by C. S. Forester on the life of Napoleon's first wife. "Josephine, Napoleon's Empress" (Dodd, Mead) brings to mind the new and nauseous phrase "as interesting as a novel". It is, more than anything else, a spiritual study of the Empress: the novelty of it lies mainly in the fact that people dead a century or so seem heretofore to have lived only through the events of their lives, not the spirit. While Forester must have relied much on his imagination for his ideas, they seem to ring true to facts. The science of psychology has served him in good stead. And the result, even to the pedantic student of history, is decidedly worth reading.

The harsh fate that has condemned Horace to be the cursed exercise of schoolboys has made La Fontaine the amusement of little children. It is difficult to say which is the sadder doom. Horace, though damned, at least reaches an audience which provides an occasional appreciative listener. La Fontaine is hugely enjoyed by a wide circle who are utterly incapable of appreciating the courtly sophistication of his writings. Edward Marsh has translated "Forty-two Fables of La Fontaine" (Harper) for an audience of celebrities which includes the Duke of Devonshire, Mrs. Winston Churchill, and "Margot". And his work, aimed at this audience, achieves something of the courtly effect. Each poem bears its dedication, an opportunity for the exercise of malice — but, unfortunately, a lost opportunity.

Although there is a great deal of physical grandeur in Walter P. Wright's "Alpine Flowers and Rock Gardens" (Dodd, Mead), there is much contained in the volume that would be delightfully helpful to the most humble though devoted garden lover. It is a book of exquisite pictures and detailed accounts of the flowers that belong by birth to the rocky regions of the mountains of Switzerland. But these flowers can, with understanding, thrive among alien rocks, and all that the devotee need know about rock gardens is clearly explained. There is also a very good chapter on "Shrubs for the Rock Garden: Lessons from the Japanese".

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

M. H. Spielmann contributes by far the liveliest as well as much the longest of the seven papers comprising "Studies in the First Folio" (Oxford), written for the Shakespeare Association in celebration of the first folio tercentenary and read at meetings held at King's College, University of London, in May and June, 1923. Mr. Spielmann's consideration of "Shakespeare's Portraiture" is, indeed, as Sir Israel Gollancz states in his general introduction, "a masterly exposition of the many subtle problems and vexed questions involved in this fascinating theme". While the author makes no vain attempt to admire either Martin Droeshut's print on the title page of the first folio, which a modern observer has stigmatized as horribly "hydrocephalous", or the Stratford bust, which has occasioned even more violent adjectives, he holds that these two presentments of the bard are the only two possessing authenticity as carrying the authority and approval of his friends, relations, and fellow workers. In addition to more complicated iconographic triumphs connected with the many portraits, Mr. Spielmann has succeeded, with the aid of a burnt cork mustache applied to his own face, in disproving the general opinion that the upper lip of the Stratford bust is of inordinate depth. He cannot, however, compliment the half moon eyebrows of the bust, which he maintains are "more like George Robey's than anybody else's", nor does he hesitate to speak of the poet's hair in the Stratford portrait as "bobbed". No less than forty seven plates embellish this important article. Additionally, generous fare is provided by such famous Shakespearian scholars as J. Dover Wilson, Sir Sidney Lee, R. Crompton Rhodes, W. W. Greg, and Allardyce Nicoll, whose labors constitute monumental proof of the recent achievements of bibliography in relation to literature.

In "Genius and Disaster" (Adelphi) by Professor Jeannette Marks, most concisely in the final chapter, one finds correlations of alcoholism, narcotism, and disease, on the one hand, with literary artists and their work, on the other. There is no room to quote these general conclusions, though one may note that the symptoms and effects of alcohol are opposed to those of opium, and that De Quincey not only exhibited those of an alcoholic rather than of an opium eater, but in fact took opium in the form of its tincture, laudanum, which is 10% opium and 90% alcohol. The generalizations are based on detailed discussion of Poe, Thomson, Swinburne and others, made confused and confusing by intense feeling and excited writing.

E. V. Lucas, the ingratiating essayist, has in "Introducing London" (Doran) compiled a thorough and practical guidebook, to set at ease the visitor in London. It is a catalogue discriminating in selection of places of charm and interest. About these places, brief notes remark the historic associations and other attractive features of interest to travelers from afar. And quite definite directions are given for transit to and from these architectural and historical museums and art galleries that constitute so much of the old world charm of London. An adequate index prefaces the book and is an easy guide to selection, while the sixteen exquisite pen and ink drawings of Ernest Coffin give fillip to the imagination and lure to the many places cited.

With the development of an art consciousness in America, the dearth of books dedicated to the work of native

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

painters is apparent. Now that the term "American art" has come to have significance, we owe a debt of gratitude to Lorinda M. Bryant for the remedy she aims to supply in "American Pictures and Their Painters" (Dodd, Mead). Mrs. Bryant recognizes some hundred and forty artists and, in dealing with their work, brings into play her fine critical faculties. Her volume, however, does not stand as a piece of art criticism. It is, rather, an intimate friendly study, descriptive, suggestive, informative, and, what is more, well written. She begins with the Boston school of Copley, Stuart, and Hunt, devotes considerable space to Inness, Homer, Whistler, and Sargent, gives high praise to such figures as Cecelia Beaux, Jonas Lie, John Carlson, and Frank Benson, and concludes with a chapter on "Ultra-Modern Art". Mrs. Bryant has grappled successfully with such perplexities as division and apportionment of space, yet we feel that at times she has stressed one element of an artist's work at the expense of the more general discussion which a panoramic study of this character demands. If the two hundred illustrations had been reproduced on a sepia rather than a pure white paper, more of the line and depth of tone of the originals would have been preserved. As it is, the result is more than disappointing.

Countless phrases have been penned to celebrate the great Napoleon, but M. Seguier has caught the significance of the man in these simple words, "Napoleon is beyond human history; he belongs to heroic times. He is above admiration; only love can rise to his level." It is this Napoleon which Walter Geer gives us in his interesting, detailed account of the latter half of the Emperor's career, "Napoleon and Marie-Louise" (Brentano). He discloses the Sisyphean character of Napoleon's building of a vast empire; discusses his alliance with Alexander of Russia, his divorce from Josephine, espousal of Marie-Louise, and the shattering of his dream. Mr. Geer is a skilful writer who weaves facts into a readable narrative. We not only coldly admire the force and dominance of one of the most spectacular figures of the ages, we learn to love and have sympathy for "L'Empereur".

Major General James G. Harbord's volume of military reminiscences, "Leaves from a War Diary" (Dodd, Mead), is the record of his eighteen months' service in France as he confided it in letters to Mrs. Harbord. Broadly, the General's extremely able and interesting book may be divided into three parts: (1) The vital preparatory year from May, 1917, to June, 1918, which he passed as General Pershing's Chief of Staff; (2) his brief but valiant command of the Marine Brigade at Belleau Wood and of the Second Division in the Soissons Offensive in July; (3) his occupancy thereafter of the supremely important post, Director of the Services of Supply, which he filled with masterly efficiency during the last four months of the war. Throughout the book there is evident a keenness of observation, an appreciative perception of encountered realities, both military and the reverse, which lead one to hope that General Harbord's appearance in the literary field may not be limited to this single eloquent and noteworthy work.

Historically minded persons with a stout pair of heels will find interest and exercise aplenty in taking the six morning walks traced by George F. Edwards in "Old Time Paris" (Dutton). The

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

book is designed for those who joy in running down old landmarks and reconstructing romance from a pile of bricks and mortar. Dr. Edwards knows the history of the church of St. Germain des Prés, can tell you where and when Mirabeau died, and has identified one of the homes of Margot, divorced wife of Henri Quartre. The information which he imparts in this slim volume would be difficult to find elsewhere, and his directions, concisely given, are easily followed. He has mapped out a veritable treasure hunt — in which everyone who finishes is a winner.

*Procession!* Dante and Beatrice, Petrarch and Laura, Aucassin and Nicolette, Sir Philip Sidney and Lady Penelope Devereux, Abelard and Héloïse, Chopin and George Sand, Michael Angelo and Vittoria Colonna, Mary Stuart and Pierre Chastelard, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Elizabeth Siddal — courts, courtiers, and courtly suitors, with the constant or wavering objects of their poet's-love — for such great lovers of history there can be no precedence! Richard LeGallienne is a poet. No one, probably, in blood, in bearing, living, were better fitted for the humorously lyric, slyly wise business of re-regaling us with "Old Love Stories Retold" (Dodd, Mead) than this expert in "flowery nominations", this master of love and life, this confessed "jongleur" — "strayed" into our noisy century!

"Modern British Lyrics", compiled by Stanton A. Coblentz (Minton, Balch) is not a collection to make Americans envious. Though it contains, of course, some fine poems, it is not, technically or artistically, a stimulating volume. It is possible that in excluding British colonists and free verse, Mr. Coblentz has played too safe. There is a sameness, a sameness that runs dangerously near the trite. Unlike George Moore who tried to present an anthology of "pure poetry" without moral ideals, Coblentz gives special prominence to the poem of lofty idealism. Perhaps for this reason the tone is less lyrical than the title indicates. Regularity of metre seems to have been the test, without considering that some free verse is plainly lyric, and many of these poems are not. At that, the book furnishes an easy, popular introduction for those who have not read much poetry.

"Samuel Pepys, A Portrait in Miniature" by J. Lucas-Dubreton (Putnam) provides a means of knowing the amusing little clerk of the acts who rose to be Member of Parliament and Secretary of the Navy, who bequeathed a library of three thousand books to Magdalene College, without wading through the many volumes of his diary. It would be difficult not to find Samuel a small and often contemptible person, but his honesty (to his diary) redeems him, and his keen interest in everybody's business makes his journal a racy account of the Restoration. M. Lucas-Dubreton has supplied additional historic facts. He also presents the man, and his times, unexpurgated.

For a really bang up, workmanlike job of psychoanalysis, the practitioner should, if possible, see and converse with the patient. Still, Edward Carpenter and George Barnefield, co-authors of "The Psychology of the Poet Shelley" (Dutton), might take exception to the rule, alleging that Sigmund Freud never saw Leonardo da Vinci. Mr. Carpenter, although confessing in his introductory paper that he has not made a special study of recent psychology, nevertheless ac-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cepts enough of the Freudian mechanisms to discuss Shelley in a manner that might have been fairly unintelligible to the poet. The conclusion is that the subject's nature "was really intermediate (or double) in character — intermediate as between the masculine and feminine or double as having that twofold outlook upon the world". Mr. Barnefield employs the term "inversion" to the same end, adding that Shelley himself was never fully aware of this peculiarity in his temperament, and dwelling upon the poet's supposed "paranoia" and other disabilities. The analysis here belongs to the type commonly classed in the fever charts as "superficial", but is perhaps to be preferred, for its novelty, to the final chapter, in which Mr. Barnefield discusses, with a startling effect of supererogation, the "possibility of his [Shelley's] having possessed what may be termed higher psychic powers".

"The Way of the Makers" by Marguerite Wilkinson (Macmillan) is a valuable book for all who pour libation to the poetic muse; for all, indeed, who seek to understand and to live the creative life. Based on the experience of British and American poets from the time of Shakespeare to the time of Vachel Lindsay, it is a comprehensive study of the nature of poetry and the poetic process. Mrs. Wilkinson has not attempted to spin vain if interesting generalities about form and substance, or to enter into any philosophical and technical discussions concerning inspiration and craftsmanship. She has presented these various problems in the light of what the makers of our literature have had to say about them, basing her findings on most abundant quotations and displaying a gratifying catholicity of taste. "The Way of the Makers" is one of those rare reference books that need gather no moss; it is an anthology of prose and poetry of the most vital nature.

Aurelien Digeon is a Frenchman who knows and loves his "Tom Jones" quite as well as any of the one hundred per cent English appreciators of that much appreciated book. His "The Novels of Fielding" (Dutton) is not, however, overbalanced by this passion, which he shares with almost all writers on eighteenth century fiction. He recounts in his biographical chapter only those aspects of Fielding's life bearing directly and obviously upon the development of his works, and proceeds to a detailed examination of the four great novels. "Tom Jones", in due turn, is interpreted as the perfect equilibrium between the two extremes of Fielding's comedy: that is to say, between the irony of "Joseph Andrews" and "Jonathan Wild" and the sentimental analysis of "Amelia" (which, the author seems to hint between the lines, even so loyal a Fielding fan as himself found a trifle tedious). M. Digeon argues independently, opposing so eminent an authority as Mr. Cross in minor matters. He handles the Richardson-Fielding relations with much ingenuity, and injects new interest into an ancient rivalry by guessing, on the basis of a freshly conceived comparison of the two books and of probabilities which await documentary proof, that "Tom Jones" was written to oppose "Clarissa Harlowe". The study is admirably grounded upon a knowledge of the literature and events of the period.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

*Compiled by Frank Parker Stockbridge, Life Member of the American Library Association, in Cooperation with the Public Libraries of America*

*A philosophical observer of human affairs lately declared that never before in history had so many biographies been written or so many persons turned to the reading of biography. As to the number of biographical works issued from the presses in a given period, he may be right; as to the number of readers of biography, he is probably wrong. The American people have always been avid readers of biography. What book published in the past half century has so nearly reached the saturation point in sales as did Parson Weems's "Life of Washington"? It is a safe wager that Mr. Werner's recent Barnum biography will never be read by a tenth as many Americans as bought and read "P. T.'s" own "Life". General Grant's "Memoirs" reached a sale of half a million or so. Nobody but the publishers themselves knows how many copies have been sold by the house to house "subscription book" pedlers of the "Lives" of Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley, rushed to press with "copy" compiled from newspaper clippings within hours after their subjects' assassinations; but the number runs easily into the millions. — F. P. S.*

## FICTION

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | The Keeper of the Bees | *Gene Stratton-Porter* | DOUBLEDAY |
| 2. | Soundings | *A. Hamilton Gibbs* | LITTLE |
| 3. | The Red Lamp | *Mary Roberts Rinehart* | DORAN |
| 4. | The Green Hat | *Michael Arlen* | DORAN |
| 5. | The Constant Nymph | *Margaret Kennedy* | DOUBLEDAY |
| 6. | Arrowsmith | *Sinclair Lewis* | HARCOURT |
| 7. | A Son of His Father | *Harold Bell Wright* | APPLETON |
| 8. | Glorious Apollo | *E. Barrington* | DODD |
| 9. | The Ancient Highway | *James Oliver Curwood* | COSMOPOLITAN |
| 10. | The Little French Girl | *Anne Douglas Sedgwick* | HOUGHTON |
| 11. | The Professor's House* | *Willa Cather* | KNOPF |
| 12. | The White Monkey | *John Galsworthy* | SCRIBNER |

## GENERAL

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | The Fruit of the Family Tree | *Albert Edward Wiggam* | BOBBS |
| 2. | John Keats | *Amy Lowell* | HOUGHTON |
| 3. | Mark Twain's Autobiography | *Samuel L. Clemens* | HARPER |
| 4. | Twice Thirty | *Edward W. Bok* | SCRIBNER |
| 5. | The New Decalogue of Science | *Albert Edward Wiggam* | BOBBS |
| 6. | The Man Nobody Knows* | *Bruce Barton* | BOBBS |
| 7. | Ariel: The Life of Shelley | *André Maurois* | APPLETON |
| 8. | Anatole France Himself* | *Jean-Jacques Brousson* | LIPPINCOTT |
| 9. | Brigham Young | *M. R. Werner* | HARCOURT |
| 10. | Jungle Days* | *William Beebe* | PUTNAM |
| 11. | The Life of William Osler* | *Harvey Cushing* | OXFORD |
| 12. | Life and Letters of Walter H. Page | *Burton J. Hendrick* | DOUBLEDAY |

*This title has not before appeared in the Monthly Score.



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THE SEVEN SEAS

*Heinrich Mann — Gerhart Hauptmann's New Novel and Play — A German Novel of the Future — World Radio — Peasant and Oriental Art — New Novels by Henri Béraud and Jacques de Lacretelle — "Debate between Folly and Cupid" — Gossip from Abroad*

HEINRICH MANN is not so well known outside Germany as his brother Thomas Mann. This is curious, because Heinrich is in no sense a German nationalist like his brother. His sympathies — if a writer with such bitter prejudices may be said to have any sympathies at all — are cosmopolitan rather than nationalist.

His new novel, "Der Kopf" (The Leader), forms the third volume of the violent polemic trilogy of which "Der Untertan" was the first, and "Die Armen" the second volume. The whole work is a survey in fiction form of political and social life in Germany during the reign of the Emperor Wilhelm II. So vindictively satirical was the first book that its publication had to be postponed in July, 1914, when it was finished, until after the war. Consisting as it does of a merciless attack on the folly of unquestioning patriotism, it is not surprising that this work was suppressed during the war. The second part, "Die Armen", depicted the struggles of the wage earning proletariat under the Hohenzollern régime. It is not difficult to identify "the leader" of the latest volume. It is Prince von Bülow. Many other important political figures are also readily identifiable, notably Admiral Tirpitz and Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg.

Heinrich Mann's savage hatred of the narrow minded German bourgeoisie is equaled only by his contempt for the incompetence and intrigues of high officialdom. This thinly disguised narrative of German history under the Chancellorship of Prince von Bülow, with its chronicling of the events of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century — Anglo-German naval rivalry, the Morocco dispute with France, unrest among the German working classes, and the rest — is an interesting footnote in fiction to students of history. It is an immense work and a remarkably sustained piece of bitterly destructive criticism.

A volume of short stories by the eighteen year old son of Thomas Mann has recently been published (Verlag Enoch, Hamburg) and welcomed in German literary circles. It is a strange production and, for foreign readers, reflects an interesting sidelight on the mentality of the postwar generation in Germany. It is entitled "Vor dem Leben" (Before Life Begins) and covers a variety of sex problems which one would have thought well beyond the range of a youth of eighteen years. It represents, one must suppose, the swing of the pendulum away from the evasions and suppressions of the previous generation.

* * * *

Gerhart Hauptmann's new novel, "Die Insel der Grossen Mutter" (The Island of the Great Mother), is an ironic tale of a party of women wrecked on a desert island with only one member of the other sex — a young boy,



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Phaon. As time goes on, a miracle occurs, so they persuade themselves. They attribute their maternity to mystical and divine origin. The population grows, and Phaon is presently expelled from the matriarchal state. The increase in population inexplicably ceases. "The Island of the Great Mother" is a daring story, redeemed from coarseness by a delicacy of touch, subtle characterization, and traces of Gallic humor which are a pleasant surprise to the reader familiar with Hauptmann's work.

Hauptmann's new play, "Veland" (Berlin: S. Fischer), has as its theme the legend of Wieland, around which I think Wagner once contemplated an opera. As dramatic material it has certainly been used before, notably by the Danish dramatist Drachmann. The play throws interesting light on Hauptmann's philosophy.

The legend is this. King Harald has imprisoned Wieland in a cave. The King's daughter Bödwild comes secretly to the cave to see Wieland's wonderful treasures, overcoming her loathing of the hideous smith, who has been mutilated by the King. Her father approaches and she hides herself. He has come to invoke the smith's magic in tracing his two sons who are lost. Wieland, declining the offer of half Harald's kingdom, demands the hand of Bödwild but is scornfully refused.

The princes are mysteriously murdered and Bödwild ravished. At a banquet prepared by Wieland in honor of the approaching marriage of Bödwild to Gunnar, the King and his court are served with wine in the skulls of Harald's sons. Wieland conjures up a vision of Bödwild and thus the King learns of her fate.

Bödwild's hatred has meanwhile turned to great love for Wieland. The shepherd Ketill admonishes him and he repents; too late, however, to escape the penalty of the abyss. The drama ends with Bödwild's appeal to Wieland to take her with him to his doom.

Hauptmann, as in "The Heretic of Soama", of which there is an English version, is here preoccupied with the glorifying influence of physical love. The saga as presented in "Veland" is intensely dramatic and the playwright's symbolism colors without obscuring its quality.

* * * *

Herr Döblin has written a prodigious work of fiction in nine books entitled "Berge, Meere und Giganten". It deals with life on this planet five hundred years hence, in an entirely mechanical age. A great war breaks out between the combined forces of Asia and a vast Anglo-American imperialist organization. Neither side gains the victory but the war results in a reaction against the power of machinery. Mankind splits up into two factions — those who wish to revert to nature, and the machine party. The latter's great plan is to make the far North habitable by melting the ice of Greenland. This project is carried into effect, but the electrical forces employed galvanize into life the buried prehistoric monsters. A race of giants arise and conquer the earth, but their tyranny passes and mankind drifts back to a primitive state — a simple, natural existence. Herr Döblin's work is indeed a vast conception, but one regrets its ponderous and humorless treatment.

* * * *

A comprehensive account of world radio organization is "Die Organisationsformen des Weltfunkenverkehrs". The author of this work, Professor

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fritz Beckmann, is a professor of economics. Two main aspects of radio, commercial traffic and broadcasting, are fully dealt with in their relation to the United States, Germany, France, and Great Britain. Germany, says Professor Beckmann, has seventeen wireless routes, more than any other country. These are mainly over North America, following the direction of her trade. But Professor Beckmann compares unfavorably the state control of wireless in Germany with the organizations of America and Great Britain. Incidentally, he prefers the British licensing system, with its freedom from commercial interests, to that of America. His is a book valuable to all professionally interested in the subject of wireless, with its rapidly developing ramifications.

* * * *

From Vienna comes a useful popular outline of the peasant art of all countries, "Bauernkunst, ihre Art und ihre Sinn". It deals in turn with woodwork, textiles, ceramics, glassware, and metal work, and surveys the decorative themes and general characteristics of peasant craftsmanship. Austria, Hungary, and the Balkans are of course strongly represented and many Viennese museum specimens are reproduced as illustrations. There are altogether 146 pages of halftones.

A very large number of books on oriental art have been published recently in Germany. An entertaining and instructive guide to Indian art, which is exceptionally well illustrated, is Stella Kramvisch's "Basic Elements of Indian Art". Those who know something of Indian art will agree that it is fundamentally more illustrative comment than an individual art. In this respect it compares unfavorably with Chinese art, for example.

A small volume by Ernest Diez is also worth notice. "Einführung in die Kunst des Ostens" is an introductory study to oriental art which should appeal to a general public.

* * * *

Henri Béraud, to whom I referred recently in these notes, is a journalist who writes historical novels in his leisure hours. The period of his new novel, "A Capucin Gourmand", is the eighteenth century, and the scene of course France. But, *mutatis mutandis*, it might be a modern story and apply to any country that has just laid down its arms after a great war.

Sergeant Lèbre is a demobilized soldier who cannot fit himself into the life which on active service he had so ardently desired. He finds himself loathing the monotony of labor in the fields. The woman he had loved has lost her looks. Nothing satisfies him, save the wine. Eventually he is attracted by the flashing eyes of a girl in a traveling fair and embarks with her on a career of vagabondage and debauchery, which ultimately degenerates into crime and leads to his execution on the scaffold. A melancholy story, told with Henri Béraud's customary power and graphic skill. In a dedicatory page he says, "I wanted Sergeant Lèbre to resemble the many heroes who are weak men. If the narrative of his adventures, of his sufferings and of his faults, should move those of our contemporaries whose hearts have not been hardened by the fashion of the hour, I shall be content."

It is a novel which should find a sympathetic echo in other countries, for the problem of the ex-soldier broken in the wars still confronts many nations.

* * * *

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The theme of Jacques de Lacretelle's latest novel, "La Bonifas", has caused discussion even in sophisticated Paris. It is the story of an innocent woman accused of one of the most ancient and yet the most modern of unmentionable sins. The sheltered country community in which the wealthy, generous Mlle. Bonifas is a prominent figure, suspects her, with the charitableness of all country gossips, of an evil motive in her benefaction of a poor consumptive girl whom she carries off for the winter to her villa in the south of France. After the death of the pretty workgirl, for whom her kindly efforts have come too late, Mlle. Bonifas returns to her native town of Vermont to meet with ostracism. Enforced solitude and the persecution of her neighbors warp her impulsively generous character, but the outbreak of war heralds her salvation. Her youth has passed but her opportunity has come. Vermont is bombed and hastily evacuated at the approach of the enemy. Refugees pour in and Mlle. Bonifas rises nobly to the occasion. Her wit, her resource, her eager temperament, find their outlet; she compels even the Germans' admiration. With the coming of peace she finds herself a heroine and already a sacred legend in Vermont. It is an admirable study.

* * * *

It is curious that Louise Labé, who was a brilliant figure in sixteenth century society in Lyons as well as one of the most important poets of her epoch, should be so little known to English readers. Occasionally her name has been mentioned in studies of French Renaissance literature, but her important position in French literature is not generally realized. Her claim to permanent fame is perhaps best exemplified in her "Debate between Folly and Cupid", of which the first complete English translation has now been made. It is published in a specially limited edition by Williams and Norgate, one of the oldest firms of London publishers, who, under the energetic direction of Sir Home Gordon, seem to have taken a new and enterprising lease of life. Sympathetically translated by Edward Marion Cox, the "Debate between Folly and Cupid" will delight the discriminating reader and justify the publishers' statement that it is "a gem of the French Renaissance".

* * * *

Michael Arlen's novel, "The Green Hat", is to be published in Holland. I hear that over 4,000 copies of the book have been sold in Sweden within a few months — a remarkable figure when one reflects that the entire population of Sweden is less than that of New York City.

An interesting sequel to the spectacular success of the Tarzan novels in Germany (over 100,000 copies were sold within a few months of publication) is the sudden disappearance of the Tarzan books from all the shop windows and counters of the German bookstores. It appears that one of the volumes, "Tarzan the Untamed", in which there is a good deal of anti-German war bias and which has consequently not been published in that country, was discovered and bitterly attacked by the German press; with the result that the other Tarzan books were immediately boycotted throughout Germany. I understand that Edgar Rice Burroughs has now agreed to withdraw the offending volume from circulation. So Tarzan may be restored to the ranks of German best sellers.

MICHAEL JOSEPH

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

# THE GOSSIP SHOP

ENGLAND sends this year her store of literary ladies and gentlemen to these shores — the facile Arlen; the prolific Noel Coward; Ashley Dukes, puzzled and charming, running away from interviewers and hiding at a secret address; I. A. R. Wylie, straightforward and trim, her tailored suit reminding one of her vigorous and carefully trimmed prose; John Drinkwater, dignified and restrained, with his lovely violinist wife; Leonard Merrick, kindly and admiring of his charming daughter; Davison, the poet, much entertained and praised. They are a gentler group than those which in other years have found these towers of Manhattan, and these houses of admirers, hospitable. Mrs. Drinkwater, tall, with auburn hair, is a most ingratiating lady. She is a musician of note who has played in this country before, having been well received by the critics in 1920. For members of the Lucy Stone League, be it noted that her name is Daisy Kennedy. She is to be heard again Tuesday afternoon, November 24, at the Town Hall in New York City. Mr. Drinkwater himself is lecturing around and about. His play about Robert Burns is soon to be published, as is his biography of Byron. I have a suspicion that, whatever Mr. Drinkwater may write, whether it be plays or biographies, he will always be most interested in his poetry. At luncheon with Mr. and Mrs. Drinkwater was Crosby Gaige, become the remarkably successful theatrical producer. A quiet, intelligent man, with a great love of books and knowledge of them, he is bringing to American producing something that is distinctly worthwhile. It combines keen theatrical sense with a fine and balanced understanding of values. With "Silence", "The Butter and Egg Man", and Channing Pollock's "The Enemy" to his credit, he has given the public beautifully produced plays which have also been excellent entertainment. It was doubtless a surprise to Mr. Drinkwater to find himself quietly introduced at lunch to a gentleman who has long made a habit of collecting his first editions. One of Mr. Gaige's hobbies is the amassing of a fine library, specializing in modern first editions and association copies. The first night of "The Enemy" was impressive. Here is a play put together by one of the most determined craftsmen of playwriting. It is, of course, a sermon, but a sermon which cannot be lightly put aside. Played expertly, and with one or two magnificent performances, it has moments of great force. It served one excellent purpose, too. One of the ladies sitting alongside me looked suddenly down on the audience and exclaimed, "There is a secretary for Sinclair Lewis!" Whereupon she asked me to secure the nameless, or at the moment nameless, young gentleman, who forthwith seems to have been hired. Mr. Lewis has just completed a novel, and has gone to Bermuda for a three weeks' rest. The trouble with resting in Bermuda seems to be that everyone comes back wearier than when he started. However, Mr. Lewis was in fine form when he left, his hair as red as ever, his spirits just as gay. I trust that Bermuda will give him the rest and the stimulation he desires.



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For many years I have been wanting to meet the author of that urbane and sparkling comedy, "The New York Idea". Langdon Mitchell, being one of the few persons over a long period in America to achieve a respectable light comedy, certainly piqued the curiosity. At luncheon several weeks ago I found him a brisk, anecdotal gentleman, with pleasant mustaches and a straightforward glance. He and Harrison Rhodes, not long since returned from summering in Venice with a new play in his pocket, exchanged stories of Henry James with verve. At the same table were two young novelists from Yale. It must be confessed that neither of them looks particularly like a novelist. This puzzled Mr. Mitchell. It is not the fashion in the particular club where we were assembled to indulge in deeply explanatory introductions. Mr. Mitchell could not determine to what class of life, or rather to what profession, this square jawed, carefully tailored young man belonged. "You are", he said, "undoubtedly a successful lawyer." "I'm thinking of writing a play", the young man replied. "He *must* be a successful lawyer", I tactfully put in. "A broker?" Mr. Mitchell attempted. "Well, at any rate," he decided to call the matter closed, "you have the smell of success about you." Which goes to prove that it is not possible to penetrate the Yale type. No matter how many successful sex novels you may have written, no matter how much this particular young man may have been frowned on by mothers and praised by critics, he still defies the intuitions of the astute older generation. As a matter of fact, I should never think of spotting Mr. Mitchell as the author of "The New York Idea"; or, if his face were not so well known in that connection, of saying that Otis Skinner, who sat opposite and chided me for having been witness of a raid the other evening, was an actor. Incidentally, the raiding of a supper club by prohibition agents is as good as a popular melodrama. They find nothing, and are heartily hissed. Perhaps, if they should conduct these affairs a trifle less on burlesque lines, and not wear absurd hats pulled down over their eyes in the centre of polished dance floors, they'd be taken a trifle more seriously.

---

On one of this autumn's most colorful days I was being driven, in great comfort, past fields dotted with Hallowe'en pumpkins and patches of shimmering copper grasses. We were on our way to the ten-acres-under-glass where Pierre Dupont grows everything from cocoanuts to chrysanthemums. Way off among the crimson and yellow leaves, on a hillside, sat Christopher Ward's home. One judge with whom I dined calls Mr. Ward the smartest man of the Delaware bar. Wilmington boasts many literary folk. It was in this town that I read "The Perennial Bachelor", because Anne Parrish once lived there, according to gossip. Although she did not write "on location", she has used Wilmington and its environs as her scene. I was taken also to Arden, that single tax community organized by Howard Pyle. It is one of the few places in which I should care to settle, addicted as I am to minute New York apartments. Tucked into corners, behind rocks, in back of tall trees, are the smallest houses in the world — gabled, of stone, candle lighted at dusk. A village of dolls' houses, with a miniature post office like a low English lodge, and quaint signs overhanging the roads. Arden is an artists' colony, naturally, and runs its own affairs from the town hall

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which adjoins the small theatre. In Wilmington itself are streets of old houses which remind one of Robert E. Lee and Lincoln and Poe; and the Negro section of two storied, red brick houses in a row seems like Greenwich Village transplanted.

---

Firmly, this season, I have beaten off the child familiar, all because someone said something about those silly verses which hit his inferiority complex where it lived. Perhaps it was this anecdote from "The American Legion Weekly" that did it. It is called "Genius":

"Any mechanics at all in this town?" inquired a tourist.

"Yep, our insurance agent's a mechanic. You'll find him up at the liberry writin' poems."

Poets are certainly sensitive plants. One young poet who brought a volume of verses in to me not long ago, went off with it in his arms, indignant because of non-publication, with the remark that some day a certain publishing house would regret not having brought out the first book of one of the great poets of the day. Now, curiously enough, he will undoubtedly be that; but it was my honest opinion that he should wait another year before publishing. However, when our own child familiar is so temperamental, what can be expected of others?

---

"Steel and Holly, or Christmas in Pittsburgh" is a sentimental but genial little pamphlet by Frances Lester Warner. The Christmas spirit is something which is either to be taken warmly to the heart, embraced, and made a tear springing, effervescent affair, or else rejected utterly and fled. Sometimes it will mean one thing to a man, sometimes another. It may be an occasion of unbearable sadness, fraught with memory; it may represent a party in the best sense of the word; at other times it may recall a finely flavored family meeting. It is a time

*From "Steel and Holly"*

of mood and change. Miss Warner finds in Pittsburgh, under the spell of holly, a chance for the utterance of lyric and historical musings. I have no quarrel with her, since I have never been in that industrial and chaotic town at the gift season. If her last paragraph seems a trifle overcharged with emotion, let me remark again that the holiday season commands us to observe the softer moments of man.

O Pittsburgh, oh huge, doing the heaviest work of the world in such an unceasing and enormous way, Happy New Year, for you deserve it. You have worked. There is a questioning note in your wild bagpipe music as you blow the old year out. Every one knows that you have giant questions to ask, and nobody knows the answer. But your problems are worthy of your steel.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The first night of "Lucky Sam McCarver" was notable chiefly because it brought two young producers into their own, John Cromwell into a part worthy of his power, and Sidney Howard and his wife, Clare Eames, into association in the finest play that has ever come from Howard's pen. William A. Brady, Jr. and Dwight Deere Wiman should go far in theatrical circles, for they have enthusiasm, patience, and intelligence. Journalism in New York City is a curiously unsettled thing. One paper noted that after cries of "Author" had failed, Miss Eames stepped forward and said that Mr. Howard could not be found. It further related that the author of last year's Pulitzer Prize play was to be seen coming down from the second balcony looking in a daze, with a three days' growth of beard. Now, it was Mr. Cromwell who on this occasion made the speech. Furthermore, I have known Sidney Howard ever since he was investigating labor difficulties and I was a reporter on the "World", and I have never seen him with even a half day's growth of beard, nor have I seen him in a daze. He is a canny and a trim young man, whose emotions are carefully in hand and whose mustache can scarcely be mistaken for a shadow over all the face. It is he, by the way, who has made the translation for the Rostand play, "The Last Night of Don Juan", to be presented in Greenwich Village. Another first night that interested me particularly was Don Mullally's "Laff That Off". It is a homely comedy which, since it opened on the same night as six other plays, received good notices from those lesser critics who have not yet learned that the drama must be a thing of liaisons, and goddams. Alan Bunce, whose first performance in New York City was with Dorothy Stockbridge's amateur organization, the Stockbridge Stocks, appeared in his first really important rôle, and displayed undeniably the fact that he is a juvenile of charm and ability. I was a little disturbed, again, by one of the critics who, commenting on the nervousness of the leading lady, said no wonder she felt that way at having been left alone in a room with a red haired man. This made me not only self conscious, but urged me to page Hugh Walpole. I understand that Mr. Bunce's father-in-law has written a play in which his daughter Ruth Nugent and Mr. Bunce are to appear. This will be, in many ways, a happy combination, and an excellent achievement for the already famous and inclusive Nugent family. Incidentally, Elliott Nugent's leading lady and wife has just borne him another potential actor who seems to absorb him more than the writing and acting of new plays.

---

The interest in children's poetry persists. From far and near come letters of praise for "When We Were Very Young". From Kansas, from Mexico, from Michigan, grateful parents write me to say that their children delight in Milne's gay rhythms. At an early hour the other morning, after he had carefully made a fire and held up the poker for inspection with the remark, "Now you see, Johnny, it's really a red hot poker", young Anthony Dell trotted out his copy of the famous book and insisted on a reading aloud. So enthusiastic was the reading that a certain publisher, arriving for breakfast in the country, said that in spite of the sound of his automobile engine he could hear it for at least half a mile. That, however, was not actually the reading, but only young Mr. Dell and his most earnest admirer trying to see who could shout the louder. I am

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wondering what he will think of E. V. Lucas's "Playtime and Company", with its Shepard illustrations and its wistful characterizations of animals and children. Anthony Dell, by the way, looks not unlike the famous Christo-

*Christopher Robin*

pher Robin, son and collaborator of Mr. Milne, a sketch of whom is here displayed. I should like to quote one of the letters concerning "When We Were Very Young", since it shows the varying appeal the poems have. It is from Mrs. J. B. Sumner, of Ithaca, New York:

Perhaps the lady who said her children didn't like "When We Were Very Young", didn't read the right verses to them. Maybe she picked out her own favorites. I did. I began with "The Dormouse and the Doctor" and "The King's Breakfast" — which I thought delicious. They were received with politeness but no enthusiasm. While I was wondering what to try next I turned over the page and rather absent-mindedly read "Hoppity". I had hardly sounded the final "Hop" when Jacques (aged three) began begging "Say it again" and Prudence (aged five) began asking, "Does his father hop too? Does Christopher Robin hop *all* the time? When his mother takes him out calling on ladies, does he go hopping *then*?" After considerable speculation on these very important matters, we all had to hop. We kept it up until I was overcome by exhaustion and avoirdupois. Then just the children hopped. "Sand-between-the-toes" was the next success. They wonder if his mother likes him to bring home so much sand. I hardly dare leave them in the sandpile lest they make personal investigations as to "sand in the eyes and the ears and the nose". They like having something to wonder about — as, just what was it happened to James James etc.'s mother, did she fall *off* of the end of the town? And to be "In the Fashion", *how* does Christopher Robin keep his tail on properly?

I rather expected Roberta (aged eight) to have a different set of favorites. She was interested in "Buckingham Palace", for instance, because she remembered the sentries in front of the Palais Royal in Brussels, but she really likes the same old things the little ones ask for over and over again. And when I say to Prudence, "Which do you like better, 'Rice Pudding' or 'Lines and Squares'?" she answers promptly, "Hoppity Hop."

So you see they don't like the ones you expect them to and they don't like them all. There are a good many genuine favorites and a few they quite thoroughly adore.

---

Florence Ayscough, collaborator of Amy Lowell in "Fir-Flower Tablets", and author of a new and most unusual book of essays, "Chinese Mirror", was recently a visitor in town, lecturing on China. She is a dynamic person. After living for many years in China, she now spends part of the year just over the border of Maine in Canada, and the rest in London. She was a girlhood friend of Miss Lowell's in Brookline, and their friendship stood well the test of years. We talked for a while of the Orient, then of Miss Lowell, and of Miss Lowell again. The success of the posthumous book of poetry, "What's O'Clock", has been great. It should be, for this is by far the most rounded of Miss Lowell's volumes. We remembered evenings

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

before the great fireplace in Brookline, and I was shown a scrapbook of Miss Lowell's, which must have been made and written when the poet was about ten years of age. Mrs. Ayscough had just completed work on the book which was to have been her next collaborative effort with Miss Lowell. She cannot bear to think of having another person work with her, so she intends to do her books in a different manner, and by herself. Poetry is losing some of its most earnest patrons. With the December number of "Contemporary Verse", Charles Wharton Stork gives over his editorship to young Henry Morton Robinson. Mr. Robinson delivers himself of the following credo, and adds that manuscripts should be addressed to Station H, Box 59, New York City:

I believe that poets should be paid for their verses; I shall begin publication on the basis of "paying for poetry"; the continuance of this policy depends wholly on the support received from subscribers. More subscriptions mean a better magazine for you, and cash payment for the poets.

The Editor hereby announces that he will not publish any of his own verses, and notifies all parties that he is not even remotely interested in promoting the poetry of any particular person or clique. The Editor is interested in poetry, not in propaganda. To those who read poetry, to those who write it, and to those who are in any way affected by its sincere, vital and peculiarly concentrated form of beauty, the Editor offers the pages of "Contemporary Verse" as a medium of expression and enjoyment.

---

Coming down Fifth Avenue the other noon from a pleasant half-hour poring over the finely printed books and special editions at my favorite bookshop, which is, by the way, the Chaucer Head on Forty Seventh Street (dangerous to admit a favorite when there are so many excellent shops and charming booksellers, but then — ), I suddenly realized that a curious green light was over everything. It was a greenish grey, and it did extraordinary things to people's faces. Those who had ventured out without the protection of cosmetics seemed normal enough; but the beautiful ladies who had consulted eagerly their vanity cases quickly took on the appearance of purplish hags. It was a courteous retort from nature. In the midst of this sudden grotesque phenomenon walked Hamlin Garland, white haired and dignified. He is still much interested in the progress and development of the Town Hall Club. He is still a calm figure in the midst of hurrying Fifth Avenue or the bellowing of literary cliques. Vachel Lindsay, too, is the same as ever. It is five years since I saw him, yet he hasn't changed one wrinkle or one note of voice. His young wife is poised and lovely, a thoroughly proper wife for a poet. They have been much entertained and gladly welcomed. Mr. Lindsay, chiefly to a group of young Yale authors, read aloud some of Stoddard King's verses. Mr. King is, although he perhaps shrinks from having the world know it, the author of the lyric of the famous war song, "The Long, Long Trail". He is a columnist in Spokane, and writes a poem a day. Mr. Lindsay believes him to be a fine poet. In the gathering were Cyril Hume, in town from his home in New Milford, Connecticut, with half of a new novel, "The Golden Dancer"; Stephen Vincent Benét, whose story "Spanish Bayonet" is to appear in the spring; and F. W. Bronson, whose "The Unpardonable Years", the tale of a boy who didn't go to college, will be published presently. I hear that another Yale man, Richmond Barrett, is to appear in print again shortly, likewise Wilmarth Lewis with a book on Horace Walpole, and Philip Barry with a play in which Laurette Taylor

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is to be starred. Impossible to keep track of this bull dog invasion of the writing field. Here, too, was Isabel Paterson, although she did not attend Yale. Her novel "The Fourth Queen" is nearly completed. It deals with the great Elizabeth and should be excellent, since Mrs. Paterson has a special gusto when she talks of that distant and golden period.

---

The humorists are being avidly sought by the motion pictures these days. Donald Ogden Stewart has left for Hollywood to aid in the production of his "The Crazy Fool". Milt Gross has answered the summons of Charlie Chaplin to assist in the great comedian's next effort. As yet Corey Ford has not been drawn into the maelstrom, but it is undoubtedly only a question of time. By the way, I predict that Will Cuppy will soon branch out from funny book reviews to something of note in the world of humor. Don Herold is a man I've always wanted to meet. His new book, "Bigger and Better", is a rare performance. Then, of course, there's Christopher Ward, who writes as good parodies as anyone in the business — "Foolish Fiction" is the title of his latest collection. Sometimes his parodies seem to me a little too good to be as funny as they might be. Robert C. Benchley still remains the favorite, so far as I am concerned. Heywood Broun can scarcely be considered in the light of a humorist, now that he has taken to fighting various battles with all the spirit and zest of a John Roach Straton turned inside out. Incidentally, it was a disappointment to receive a letter from Mr. Broun, who had promised to contribute to this number, saying honestly and in a perfectly straightforward manner that, alienated by an editorial of ours entitled "Clean Fiction", he felt that he could not write for a magazine which seemed to be veering toward opinions of which he heartily disapproved. I am sorry not to number him this month in a list of contributors of which I am really

*From "Bigger and Better"*

proud, and which seems to represent varying shades of literary opinion. In this connection I should like to quote part of a letter from Floyd Dell to Heywood Broun which the latter graciously printed in his column of the New York "World", after criticizing Mr. Dell somewhat sharply for having written a novel so romantic as "Runaway". Please note the italicized part (the italics are mine):

> I am glad that you are continuing your warfare on the censorship, and that cause is so dear to my heart that you are welcome to use me (as you have done) as a club to beat it over the head with. I hope to see the censorship sufficiently beaten in our time that we can write freely on those aspects of sex now under the censor's ban. *But I should be sorry if, in the meantime, another unofficial censorship grew up among the intelligentsia which would make it disgraceful for a writer to write about anything except those particular aspects of sex! It would be a pity if a writer could not, except at the risk of losing his reputation for sincerity, write about people to whom a hearty kiss is equivalent to marriage; or if he might write about them only satirically or sarcastically.* There are all sorts of people in the world to write about; and freedom to write about those that happen to interest me at the time is all I ask from anybody.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Dorothy Canfield Fisher was a speaker at the recent dinner held by the Child Study Association of America as part of their three day conference in New York. I wish that all parents might take example from the practical sanity and at the same time large vision displayed by Mrs. Fisher in regard to her own children and to all children everywhere. As for children all over the country, THE BOOKMAN'S Children's Essay Contest has brought in some amusing results. The names of the ten prize winners and the first and second essays will be printed in the January issue. Meantime, here are two essays which seemed most interesting of those received before October 15. We reproduce them exactly as they were written:

## TAKING MY BOOK FRIENDS SIGHTSEEING

By Barbara Moody

*Age 13*

WESTFIELD, NEW JERSEY

"Buy all tickets for the top at the booth on the left," cried a voice as we entered the door of the famous Woolworth Building.

"Don't buy a ticket for me," said Peter Pan, one of our party. "I can fly up."

"Oh! I wouldn't dare go up," said Beth, one of the four little women, "I am too timid."

"Come now Beth, won't you go up for me? I wouldn't let any one hurt you," coaxed her sister Jo.

"I wish I hadn't come, with a bunch of girls," said Penrod disgustedly. "I expected a lot of men, but I am glad that Mr. Ulysses came anyhow."

"Oh! do you play the glad game too, Penrod?" asked Pollyanna. "I am so glad that you do, and I'm glad that I came, and I'm glad that Mr. Standish, David, and everybody came, I'm just glad, glad, glad."

We were all hustled into an elevator and we held our breaths as we rose and rose to the top floor. It was a clear, bright November day, and as we stepped on the platform at the top of the massive structure, we could see many boats steaming up the beautiful Hudson.

"Christopher Columbus!" cried Jo as she stood hands behind back, looking towards the harbor.

"Nay, my dear, the Statue of Liberty, I have just been informed," corrected Ulysses gently.

"Peter, get down from the railing, you make me nervous," pleaded Meg. "I am so afraid that you will fall."

"He can fly, Meg, you know," said Amy the youngest March girl, "Will you show me how, Peter?" she begged.

"Yes, but later," answered Peter Pan, the little boy who never grew up, as he tried to walk the railing.

"We have nothing like this in London," said David Copperfield, his dark eyes shining as he looked at the tall buildings below.

"How I wish that John could see this," Miles Standish exclaimed as he looked through a telescope at one of America's largest passenger boats. "It is massive beside the Mayflower. I should think that this ship would sink, it is so heavy."

"Jimminy Crickets! wait until I tell Sam about this," Penrod exclaimed. "I am *pleased* that I came," with a meaning glance at Pollyanna which she did not see.

After we had spent almost one hour at the top of the building we again held our breaths and rode slowly down to the bottom of the building Penrod and Jo whistling most of the way.

"Jo!" wailed Meg. "It is scandalous the way you act."

"Oh! she's all right, she's a good sport," answered Penrod for his newly made friend.

Pollyanna, Peter, Amy, Beth, and David had a wonderful time together and several times I heard Pollyanna say "glad," and, as I watched Ulysses' and Miles Standish's faces as they talked and looked at the city, I imagined that they all enjoyed the trip immensely.

## TAKING MY BOOK FRIENDS SIGHTSEEING

By Jane Landau

*Age 13*

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

When I tendered invitations to my numerous friends, whom I had so often met in the library, little did I anticipate so many acceptances. They came from all classes, — from Dorothy Vernon, the famous coquette, to Wolf, son of Lad. It was a more difficult situation than I had presumed. For if they did not enjoy my company and their surroundings, never again would I have the honor of their

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

presence. So everything must be harmonious.

Finally, after much secret plotting, I thought of the Straus Building Tower. I was sure that they had never had a bird's eye view of Chicago, from a spot safer than an aeroplane, but equally thrilling.

They were all at my residence on time except Mistress Vernon, who, in her elaborate velvet dress appeared as if she had literally stepped from an old fashion plate; while Peter Pan, beside her, made a sharp contrast, in his simple, sketchy suit of leaves.

As I could not afford a taxi or private omnibus, together with the expense of tickets to the tower, suitable raiment for myself, and refreshments, we rode modestly and inexpensively in a Ford furnished by one of my considerate friends, who had once been through a similar ordeal. As its seating capacity was limited, Dorothy sat beside me in the front seat (for she was a vain miss, as I suppose everybody knows) and was careful not to muss her dress. The Little Colonel, Jo March, and Merton of the Movies occupied the rear seats, while Hans Brinker, Dick Swiveller, and Little Lord Fauntleroy squeezed in somehow, on the others' laps. Peter Pan and Tom Sawyer, both fearless, with Wolf in their laps, perched unceremoniously atop the equipage. Thus, in this grand fashion we drove proudly down Michigan Avenue, with all Chicago staring at the strangely contrasting characters, with whom they were so well acquainted. Peter, especially loved attention.

"Drive very slowly, and honk a lot," he requested, "because all the people are looking at me."

"Oh, you conceited fellow!" called Hans Brinker, looking at the roof of the car. "Can you skate as well as I, or save your mother from the pangs of hunger, as I did one winter? All you do is sit around, and pipe on your flute, or sing to your shadow."

"I think you're both very industrious and good," interposed Fauntleroy's gentle voice, "for Peter can't do anything but pipe, because he's so musical; but he has power over all children. You are of a different type, Hans Brinker."

Peace was restored for sometime. We arrived at the tower in safety, but Tom Sawyer would probably have fallen off, had not the place been netted in, so eager was he to make us anxious.

"Isn't it beautiful, Mister Merton? I suppose you think it would make a fair background for a cowboy mystery," said Dorothy Vernon very sweetly, elbowing her way to Merton, who, being the only respectable-appearing man there, immediately became a target for her flirtations.

"A cowboy mystery in the movies taken in this vicinity? We want the open spaces — the great, wide expanse where cowboys are kings, not brokers and bankers!" Merton said with somewhat of a swagger, but he instantly paled, as he realized her intent, and looked away.

I stooped to pet Wolf, who was looking decidedly forlorn, as was his custom when in the least neglected, and so missed the next line of events. The dog looked up at me with those soulful eyes, and immediately I wished that all canines had as much sense as this immortal one. He laid his head in my hand, and whined pitifully, as if afraid of the lofty height.

But suddenly I heard shrieks, and saw Dorothy, dripping wet, lying on the floor, with that rogue of a Tom Sawyer standing by, laughing, and Hans Brinker shaking him vigorously. It seemed that Dorothy, finding that Merton would not pay attention to her, shammed a faint, and fell into his arms. He, bashful lad, paled and stood like a mummy, not knowing what to do. Tom Sawyer disappeared, and Peter flew out to find him.

But Tom was the sort of boy whom nothing could daunt, and he had soon returned with a glass of water, which he emptied over the prostrate lady. And thus all the excitement, and Dorothy dripping wet.

"Ah, my fair lady, such is the cataract of fate which delivers itself unto us, and, as Milton said, in his exquisite 'Paradise Lost', which portrayed to us the seeming emotions of the weaker —"

It was Dick Swiveller, as ever, delivering his rigmarole. He received a smart slap in the face from Jo March, who scolded him severely in her masculine way, which she always acquired in anger.

"Don't you dare! Stop your talking for a few minutes. Instead of speaking so much, why don't you offer her your coat?"

"Here is my coat, if you wish, Mistress Vernon," said Fauntleroy.

"I think we have had enough for today," I suggested. "I am sorry our trip had such a tragic ending. I suppose you will never want to visit me again."

"On the contrary," Dick interposed, undaunted, "we have enjoyed to the utmost the train of exciting events caused by our young friend."

We drove home with a rather bedraggled appearance, but still joyful. Will my friends visit me again? Only time will tell.

---

"Picturesque America, Its Parks and Playgrounds" is a luxurious, if a somewhat disturbing book. Beautifully illustrated in color and with many

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

photographs, it makes one completely envious of those who have time to run about and see all these natural wonders. However, one can possess the book and conjure up images which its editor, J. F. Kane, admirably envisions. These California-residing authors! They write one, "We left New York feeling just a little ill." How would they feel, I wonder, if they lived here all the time? Earl Derr Biggers, for example, spends most of his time in Pasadena. He studied English at Harvard University under the famous Copey and Dean Briggs. He was night police reporter and dramatic critic. Then he left town. I suppose all dramatic critics ultimately leave town. Biggers, however, reformed, and began to write on his own account. He has done four novels, some fifty short stories, had a hand in five plays, including a musical comedy; in fact, he seems to have done everything except dabble in the technical end of the motion pictures. Yet he is contented, more than contented, to live in California. "Shall I go to Europe?" said a young author to me this noon. "Shall I go to New Hampshire on a fishing trip? What shall I do? I can't write in New York City." The answer, under the circumstances, seemed to be: "Go home and make yourself write." I rather think that writing can be done anywhere, and that New York can be made to seem as rural as Kansas, if one definitely decides to stay at home of an evening now and then.

---

Her publisher informs me that the charming twelve-year-old Nathalia Crane has been elected to the British Society of Authors, Playwrights, and Composers of which Thomas Hardy is president, an honor not bestowed upon any American poet since Walt Whitman. This, indeed, is cause for notation, if not rejoicing. Certainly we rejoice with Nathalia. Her picture is very charming, and Louis Untermeyer, who has met her, assures me that she is

*Nathalia Crane*

a simple and delightful little girl. But I should like to think that any society of which Thomas Hardy is president, provided he is actively so, would honor American poets somewhat more stable if less spectacular than Miss Crane. "Lava Lane", however, as I have said elsewhere in the magazine, is a triumph of sophistication and of witty saying. Twelve-year-olds are to be feared and, alas! I fear Miss Nathalia. She once wrote me a most disarming letter. I hope that she will write me again. Having met her jolly mother, I hope some day to meet her. Speaking of children, one of the most attractive outcomes of Children's Book Week was the "Map of Adventures for Boys and Girls", executed by Paul M. Paine and published by the R. R. Bowker Company. Here is a gaily colored wall map of the world, showing "Captain Cook's Last Harbor", where "The Man without a Country" died at sea, the church of "The Sky Pilot", the home of "Uncle Remus", etc. It is a fascinating sheet over which to spend many a dreaming moment, and it should delight thousands of children.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Two enthusiasts call our attention to two books appropriate to the holiday season. Anne Carroll Moore, who was prevented by illness from contributing her Christmas article, but who furnished a good substitute, writes us:

I have just received the most beautiful book of the year — a new pictorial life of Saint Francis of Assisi, published by the Marshall Jones Company of Boston. The book costs twenty five dollars, and no wonder for it contains fifty exquisite full page illustrations in color by Pedro Subercaseaux, the South American painter, who sought and found in Umbria the Saint so dear to childhood and made him live again in pictures of great tenderness and beauty. Such a book is of incalculable value in the education of children all over the world, and its publication in a form so completely satisfying to the eye, yet so eminently practical for the use of libraries, is gratifying evidence that the art of bookmaking is still cherished in America. "Saint François d'Assisè", whose brief interpretative text is given in both French and English, represents a still more difficult undertaking than did the publication of "The Story of Jesus" (1920) with its reproductions in color from the Italian Primitives.

And Hildegarde Fillmore of "Good Housekeeping" reports:

Inside and out, I have never seen a lovelier book of Christmas poetry than Marguerite Wilkinson's anthology, "Yule Fire" (Macmillan). Its jacket is rose colored, to match the tint of the page ends, and the covers are a soft green embossed in blue and gold. Gift books are so often a hodgepodge of selections lavishly and inappropriately bound that it is a relief to come upon a book that is really worth the work that the publishers have put on Mrs. Wilkinson's compilation. She calls it "a collection of poems of Christmas time taken from all periods in our own literature and that of England, with an introduction telling how the Yule Fire burns brighter than any other for any person and for all mankind". The decorations by George M. Richards are exquisite, and his use of the Burning Babe motif seems to me a quaint and charming one. Robert Southwell's queer old poem of that name has never ceased to haunt me, ever since I chanced upon it in childhood in a weird volume called "Gleanings from the Poets".

This noon at luncheon was observed Frank Craven, talking enthusiastically about a play he is producing in which he is offering thirty football players (actually having played) to the public. He said something, too, about a guitar. It *must* be a college play, don't you think? Here, too, George Chappell greeting Corey Ford with verve, and Leonard Merrick, slender, brown, nervous handed, talking to calm George Barr McCutcheon who is again on the best seller lists of the autumn. George Abbott, author and actor, engaged in violent conversation with Sidney Howard, playwright, and John V. A. Weaver, poet and author of articles for many magazines on the art of living. His wife, Peggy Wood, is being seen currently in a reappearance in New York of "Candida". The press agent of a famous motion picture company was also there, and that reminds me that another press agent wrote me an enthusiastic letter concerning Laurence Stallings's "The Big Parade", and the gigantic production of "Ben Hur". The latter is to have a Christmas opening at the Cohan Theatre, with trumpets blowing and crowds watching and all the fanfare that movie openings are coming to possess. He further says that the actual cash outlay for that picture was $2,800,000, and that a special edition of Lew Wallace's famous novel will be "conspicuous in all the bookshops this season". Michael Arlen has departed for the coast to try his hand at the industry of Hollywood, but not before allowing his publishers to announce a new novel for late spring, 1926, to be titled "The Tower of Babel". Micheline Keating, whose mother is intimately connected with the motion pictures, is much puzzled by reviews of her "Fame", which called her a very naughty young lady. She is far from that, and impresses one as a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

simple, straightforward girl of eighteen or thereabouts. She is at work on a new story, and refuses to be hurried. The poetry in her bookshelf leads me to remark that François Villon and Edna St. Vincent Millay are amusing choices for a young lady who looks like a Rossetti painting.

---

The artists' colony at Woodstock, New York, recently issued their annual magazine, "Hue and Cry". It is a lovely thing, with many amusing and beautiful sketches, and some fine prose and good poetry. I liked particularly James Rorty's poetry and Pamela Bianco's drawings. Pamela is the most consistent of the child geniuses. She continues to paint quite calmly and to draw with precision, and she is a sturdy, interesting girl. What must it be like to live in an artists' colony? Those who indulge in this pastime seem to turn out good work, and to find the ways and means of life pleasant. It occurs to me that such a colony might be trying for a publisher and editor, although valuable in many ways and stimulating. However, the only one I ever visited was Croton-on-Hudson, which has now become a splendidly quiet and middle aged community, with few temperamental flares. Somehow, I suspect that such a transformation would happen to any community that started out to be artistic. At first it would flame and burst, bubble and burn. Scandal and art would flourish, then scandal would die out and art would still flourish. By this I do not mean that either Croton or Woodstock has ever been characterized by the scandalous, and surely the MacDowell Colony can have had only the veriest ripples of the untoward. Also it occurs to me that the only reason why artistic folk are generally thought scandalous is that they are a trifle less reticent about their goings and comings than others; and that many a suburban community might well be considered artistic, on the ground of temperament and gossip. Incidentally, I hope that Miss Bianco will favor us with another exhibit of her work this year. Hers, and the George Bellows exhibit at the Metropolitan, pleased me mightily.

*Decoration by Pamela Bianco from "Hue and Cry"*

---

Somewhere the other day I happened on a sonnet by George Sterling on his friend Ambrose Bierce. It is interesting to compare the attitude shown therein with that displayed in his recent article in "The American Mercury":

TO AMBROSE BIERCE

I saw a statue in the market-place —
The guerdon of a life of noble toil.
Austerely shone the marble that should foil
Oblivion, tho' the desecrated base,
Round which the sullen huckster trod, bore trace
Of dogs' defilement — transitory moil
That expiating rains would soon assoil;
But oh! the sunlight on that tranquil face!

What to the Titan were the mindless deed,
Mire-born, and swiftly with the mire made one?
No more than could the marble couldst thou heed
The mongrel, and the hate of souls uncouth —
Thou eagle that hast gazed upon the sun
And canst endure the light which is the truth!

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED